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AT ALL BOOKSTORES

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Pictures and Censorship

BY BEN RAY REDMAN

FEW Hollywood story conferences even begin to achieve that smoke-filled-room atmosphere, long dear to political reporters, in which pictures are conceived and aborted, incubated and often done to death, before someone pipes up: "But what about the Hays Office? Will they let us get away with it?"

The dubitable "it" may be merely a title or a line of dialogue, a scene, a gesture, a costume, a word, an incident, or an entire story. The powerful "they," whose nod of approval is so important, are the members of the Production Code Administration board, headed by Joseph I. Breen. But this board is only one department of a trade association officially known as the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., and unofficially known as the Hays Office. A former Republican Postmaster General has stamped his name on the organization over which he presides, and Hollywood applies his name indiscriminately to the whole or to any of its parts, even when the part can boast as its very own a personality as impressive as the one developed by the genial bulk of Joe Breen.

United Artists

"For all the ballyhoo, . . . 'Blockade' turned out to be just another mediocre spy picture" . . . (Henry Fonda and Madeleine Carroll in "Blockade.")

Across Hollywood the shadow of the Hays Office falls long and wide, but, to the average producer, director, or writer, the Hays Office means only one thing: censorship. Only in connection with censorship does the average picture-maker come into contact with this august power. Not for him is that rarefied atmosphere of high business and production policy, wherein West Coast studio heads and East Coast company executives huddle mysteriously with the quondam Harding helmsman. When he says Hays, he means Breen and his men; and, if he is true to his kind, he does not like them. In fact, he damns them. They are forever getting in his way and in his hair, cramping his style, forbidding him to do this, preventing him from doing that. He is asked to change the title of a picture from "The Lady Misbehaves" to "The Lady Behaves." He is warned against the word "virtuous,"—to say nothing of "virgin." He is told that his characters must not drink, if their drinking does not advance the plot. He is advised that the bathing-suit worn by his ingenue must not be too provocative; that it is not permissible to refer to a lady as a tramp; that good must always conquer evil; that the forces of law and order must not be treated with disrespect, or the courts of the land shown ever to be unjust; that adultery is never a fit subject for comedy, and that illicit love should not be presented as attractive or alluring; that "Pure love, the love of a man for a woman permitted by the law of God and man, is the rightful subject for plots," while "the passion arising from this love is not the subject for plots." He is told all these things, and others beyond numbering, in the eleven mimeographed pages of the "Adopted Code to Govern the Production of Motion Pictures," and in the judicial decisions, *ex cathedra* utterances, and *obiter dicta* of Mr. Breen and his lieutenants. In short, the Hays Office is always with him; and he doesn't like it. But for Hays,—what pictures he would make! Perhaps.

Meantime, Mr. Breen and his board are quick to argue with anybody who speaks of their activities as censorial. One must think that even a hasty collation of the dictionary definitions of "censor" would reconcile them to a word that fairly defines them; yet they are obdurate. But, by whatever name they call it, the nature of their business is plain, as are the effects of their labor. They are on surer ground when they protest that their unpopularity within the industry is not deserved, when they point out, to those who curse them, that they are merely doing the job that they are being paid to do by the grousers' own employers. This is true.

The Hays Office censorship has been imposed upon the picture industry by its leaders; if its springs of action sometimes seem to be cowardice and short-sighted greed, that is not the fault of the hirelings. It is a self-censorship, a preventive censorship, calculated to save the picture-makers time, trouble, and money—above all, money. It stands between the producers and the state, city, and other local censor boards. It stands between the studios and the innumerable organizations and pressure groups that are interested in what is shown on the American screen. Unofficially, it stands between the procedure and the foreign countries that concernedly scan the character of Hollywood's product. Its job is to tell the producers what they may and may not do, or (to translate) what they can or cannot sell at the box-office without offending any persons or interests whose umbrage might prove costly. On the surface, this censorship is conspicuously moral; at heart, it is purely commercial.

Its mechanics may be briefly indicated. A studio decides (the personification of studios is an old Hollywood custom) that

Next Week

BROADCASTING BOOKS
By LOUIS REID

AFTER THE DEATH OF DON JUAN
By SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER
Reviewed by George Dangerfield

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it would like to make a certain story. If it is suspected that this story may be "fundamentally unacceptable under the Code," it is submitted to Breen's men for an opinion. If the opinion is adverse and if, after a meeting of the minds, it is found that the story cannot be "licked," or made fundamentally acceptable, it is shelved; but if a satisfactory "angle" is arrived at, work goes forward. In most cases, however, the Hays Office is not consulted until a "treatment" or a first script has been prepared. This is assigned to a member of Breen's board, who studies it word by word to discover any and all of its objectionable features, however trivial. He then writes a letter to the producer, pointing out the alterations and deletions that he considers "advisable." The producer may follow this advice without argument, or, if he chooses to argue, call a conference of all interested persons from the studio and the Hays Office. The controversial points are discussed, and sometimes ground is yielded by both sides, until a working agreement is reached. A final script is prepared, and approved or subjected to further alterations. The picture is shot and a rough cut is viewed by a Hays Office man, again with approval or with suggestions for additional changes. At last, when the Hays Office is completely satisfied, and not before, the finished picture is blessed by Breen's "purity seal" and is ready for the "can." The major studios are obliged, by their trade agreement, to obtain the Breen seal for all their pictures; and, because of the scope and power of the producer-distributor network, the independents must obtain it if they wish to secure a profitable release. Ninety-eight per cent of all films that are being generally exhibited bear the seal.

The procedure described is obviously designed to guard the studios, at every stage of production, against wasting money on story material and film that may be cut to ribbons or rejected by local boards, or that may offend persons or interests capable of retaliating through the box-office. Judged by the steady decline in the number of local cuts and rejections throughout the country, and by the current comparative contentment of such organizations as the Legion of Decency, the record of the Production Code Administration, under Breen, is one of notable achievement. It would seem unfair, then, for producers and directors and writers to kick against Breen and his men for doing, and doing well, the job that they are hired to do.

But the complaint is that the Code Administration, under Breen, is over zealous. The Code was adopted some eight years ago, and Mr. Breen has been in office about four; pictures that were made under the Code, before his appointment to power, must be scrutinized anew before they can be re-issued, and in many cases this scrutiny results in head-shaking and fresh deletions. "A Farewell to Arms" is one example. The tablets of the law are the same, but a new priest has arisen to interpret them. It has been said that Mr. Breen's interpretation is that of a devout Catholic, alert to satisfy every wish, and to yield to every prejudice of the professional moralists of his Church; but he has denied this. So one may only observe that the workings of Mr. Breen's mind exhibit a happy identity with the mental processes of the moralists in question. That his judgments are expressed through subordinates of differing faith and race is interesting, but should not be misleading.

Paramount

"Pictures that were made under the Code, before [Mr. Breen's] appointment to power, must be scrutinized anew" . . . (Gary Cooper and Helen Hayes in "A Farewell to Arms.")

It has also been charged, and denied, that the more powerful studios are permitted "to get away with murder," while the weaker ones are made to toe the censor's line. That the Hays Office censorship operates with great flexibility in the case of different pictures, and thereby achieves remarkably various results upon the screen, is certainly true; but the most charitable explanation of this phenomenon is the one sometimes offered by the censors themselves. "Every picture is an individual problem." Quite so. And every problem is worked out by individuals from the production side and the Hays side of the business. If these individuals happen to understand and like one censor, they are sure to arrive at results more satisfactory to all concerned than if they are not so friendly and so mutually understanding. Even censors are human. But for the purpose of this article their variations are not significant.

Every reasonable person knows that pictures intended for general distribution cannot be free from censorship; and most persons who read the Production Code will agree that it is a fairly reasonable document. They may find it amusing in spots and they may be surprised to discover, in so profane a context, not less than six references to "divine law." But, in the main, it has good sense on its side. However, the point is that the current censorship of pictures is far stricter and more elaborate than the Code would indicate. The Code, for example, says "Crime need not always be punished, as long as the audience is made to know that it is wrong." But Breen and his men will fight to see that it is punished, invariably. The Code does not forbid a wrong-doer to escape earthly penalties by suicide. But Breen forbids it—even though his faith would assure him that suicide means punishment enough for any crime. The Code says nothing about drinking, but the Hays Office has been known to do battle against one innocent highball in a picture, while permitting wholesale drinking, that "advanced the plot," in such pictures as "A Star Is Born" and "Kid Galahad." The Code says that scenes of passion "should not be presented in such a way as to arouse or excite the passions of the ordinary spectator." Breen's application of this rule is nothing less than a libel on the average spectator.

These examples of practice that is stricter than theory may seem unimportant. They are cited only as being typical; and they are unimportant in comparison with another discrepancy between the written word and the enforcement of the law. Nowhere in the Code do we read: *Thou shalt not offend anyone, anywhere, at any time.* Yet this is filmland's first commandment, and the greatest of all. And it comes to us from the men upon whom the responsibility for picture

(*Continued on page* 13)

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Man of Letters

UNFORGOTTEN YEARS. By Logan Pearsall Smith. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1939. $2.50. (*Published Jan.* 3.)

Reviewed by IRWIN EDMAN

THE best of autobiographies may be the least crowded with events. For what remains of interest in a life is what it signifies, and significance lies in emotions recollected and thoughts provoked by persons and by things. The remembrances of a cultivated spirit are not simply records, they are reflections, reminiscences turned into soliloquy, and a life lifted into a poet's image and a philosopher's theme. The art of autobiography was made for Logan Pearsall Smith, whose "Trivia" are a delicate monument to perceptions mingled of irony and beauty, of sensibility and that common-sense which he seems to have inherited from those Quaker ancestors he so engagingly portrays.

"Unforgotten Years" is one of the most delightful books of its kind published in many years. Its kind is that of reflective reminiscence. It is a story told, in selective chapters, with the amused tenderness and skeptical detachment of the cultivated cosmopolitan and, deeper than the cosmopolitan, of the dedicated writer. For it is perfectly clear that Mr. Smith is in the Flaubertian tradition of an almost fanatic loyalty to the discipline of the writing art. But the story he tells is more than his own; it constitutes a picture of a vanished world, the one inhabited by his Quaker family in Germantown, and by Henry James in England, and Santayana and Bernard Berenson on the Continent, the scene of a provincial Quaker corner of America, and of a sophisticated and expatriate America-in-Europe. It is a testament of a man of letters, in the leisurely old-fashioned sense of the word. The literati of the left or even those who "wear their old school ties a little to the left," will probably cavil. They will be annoyed at the note of condescension to our American "civilization without mind." They will resent the social scene of the writing, Mrs. Wharton's yacht. They may even resent the Ægean sea. But nobody could fail to be charmed by the delicious savor of this exquisite and economical writing, the humorous evocation, with artful exactitude, of the life of an evangelical Quaker business man's family in Pennsylvania in the seventies or eighties, of an earlier Harvard, of an earlier one-man invasion of Oxford. Everyone will be charmed by the extraordinary portraits (somehow much more complete than their brevity would seem to make possible) of Benjamin Jowett, of Henry James, of Whitman, Matthew Arnold, Whistler, of Edith Wharton, of Mrs. Bernard Berenson, the author's gifted sister, of the Paris of a young American trying to learn to write there in the late eighties. Every writer, or lover of good writing, will be moved by the account of a ten-years' apprenticeship to writing in relative isolation in Sussex. And every reader of Whitman will be fascinated by the account of what the Good Grey Poet was like as he visited weeks on end the charming and intensely respectable Smith family in Germantown, with the unforgettable moment when Whitman appeared, after some meditation, in his overcoat at dinner-time, because the Smiths were having company, and he did not think his sweater would quite do. Readers will remember even more the sense Logan Pearsall Smith conveys of Whitman's superb humanity and geniality, and his sovereign passion for the art of poetry. Amusing, too, will be Mr. Smith's account of the difficulties, some of them due to illiterate English snobbishness, of "hunting for manuscripts in England," and the rewards and varieties of that cultivated sport.

From a drawing by Rothenstein
Logan Pearsall Smith

But most of all the reader will enjoy, I think, the savor and quality of the writing itself, and the temperament and realms of feeling which the book conveys. It is the same temperament that produced "Trivia," that minor classic, and the book grows out of the same soil. Mr. Smith has more than a touch of Pater, but a Pater skeptical and modernized; there is some of Matthew Arnold in him, and though he does not mention the names, Montaigne and Renan. This is the book of a bookman, and for bookmen. It will, doubtless, be too bookish for some. But what an exquisite bouquet to this rare vintage. Or, to change and to mix the metaphor, what a distillation of life observed and remembered in this "religio grammatici."

The life recalled and reflected upon is, it is true, rather special. The Quaker evangelical world in which Mr. Smith grew up is, however, entrancing to read about, and the portrait of his pious and humorous mother and of his father's notoriously passionate and almost amorous evangelism make pages of delightful document. His later world of expatriation is special, too, and sometimes the author writes as if the world were a small club with clubhouses at Oxford, Paris, and Florence, and a House Committee consisting of Santayana, Berenson, Mrs. Wharton, and Henry James, with exchange privileges at Harvard. The House Committee do not seem to have much hope for America, with its "ice-cream soda fountains."

There is a touch of the gentle and genteel despair of an urbane old gentleman living abroad thirty years, as Mr. Smith tells us he has done, on an annuity, and recently on more. But these sublimated provincialisms may be forgiven by us provincials. For this gallery of portraits and of memories is beautifully given us by a writer who contagiously loves and exhibits the art of writing.

Irwin Edman is the author of "Philosopher's Holiday."

In the Midst of Life . . .

DR. NORTON'S WIFE. By Mildred Walker. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

THIS intelligent novel of marital love has for its setting the medical school of a Mid-western university; for its characters, a science-loving, idealistic teacher of medicine, his stricken wife, her attractive sister, and a host of young and old doctors and their families whose counterparts are recognizable in every modern medical faculty. Its theme is the tragedy of incurable disease and its effect on the destinies of those whose training permits no escape other than honesty and courage.

When the story opens, Sue Norton lies in bed before dawn, reviewing the significant moments since her illness was first apparent, while she struggles to force her almost rudderless body to make the journey to her husband's room for one of their intimate talks—once so frequent and now so rare. As yet she does not suspect the finality of the obscure nerve disease that is insidiously undermining her beauty and vivacity, and converting her into a heavy, awkward creature with less and less control of either her muscles or her emotions. What disturbs her most is the recession of the rare intimacy that has given so much meaning and depth to their twenty years of married life. As

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the story progresses, the harassed husband seeks relief and temporary escape in the companionship of her younger sister, so like her, and now the manager of Sue's household. How the wife responds to this situation, how she faces the inevitability of her fate, and how love meets this cruel test, is Mrs. Walker's story.

It would be unfair, however, to create the impression that the book is wholly sombre. Interwoven into the plot are faculty parties, hospital scenes, young assistants and their brides, all of whom, even the least important, are handled with an assurance and honesty that gives the novel the convincing quality of a photograph. Mrs. Walker has chosen a subject seldom met in fiction, and one that must have demanded considerable courage. She has handled it with rare skill and has produced a clear-cut, sensitive novel far above the common run.

Jacobite Romance

COLIN LOWRIE. By Norah Lofts. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. $2.50. *(Published Jan. 3).*

Reviewed by FRANCES WOODWARD

LAST summer Norah Lofts published "Requiem for Idols" and this reviewer then remarked that though the book might be hokum, it was at least vigorous hokum. Norah Lofts has plenty of vigor, and in "Colin Lowrie" she lavishes it with the same abandoned joy which lets her strain the arm of coincidence, fling her hero around the world and back, pop him in and out of danger, poverty, riches, and beds.

Whether Miss Lofts actually knows much about the fate of the Jacobite plotters of '45, or about the life of slaves on southern island plantations, or what her red-headed, high-hearted hero might privately have thought about his wenching is hard to say. Nor is it of any particular importance. The book is romance of the most flamboyantly unscholarly sort. Everything happens to Colin—everything Miss Lofts can imagine, and that's a lot. Piracy and slavery, murder and tobacco planting, wagon peddling and the snobbery of the Planters' Ball, friendship and hate and love. Lots of love, and the one great one for the little dead nun who could not keep her rendezvous, whose memory the dark amazing Virginia beauty, with the strange pale eyes and the magnificent house and the ability to run her plantation like a man could never quite vanquish. Yes, honestly, it is like that, little dead nun and all, even to "Out of that nettle danger" on the frontispiece. . . . And just the same it's fun, so that once more it must be said that though Miss Lofts is no great new light on the horizon of English letters, she doesn't write about Mummy and the rectory party, and she gives you a good time.

Library, Stage, and Radio

HEROD AND MARIAMNE. A play in two acts by Clemence Dane. New York: Doubleday Doran & Co. 1938. $1.75.

OSCAR WILDE. A play in three acts by Leslie and Sewell Stokes. New York: Random House. 1938. $2.

AIR RAID. A verse play for the radio by Archibald MacLeish. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 75 *cents.*

Reviewed by RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

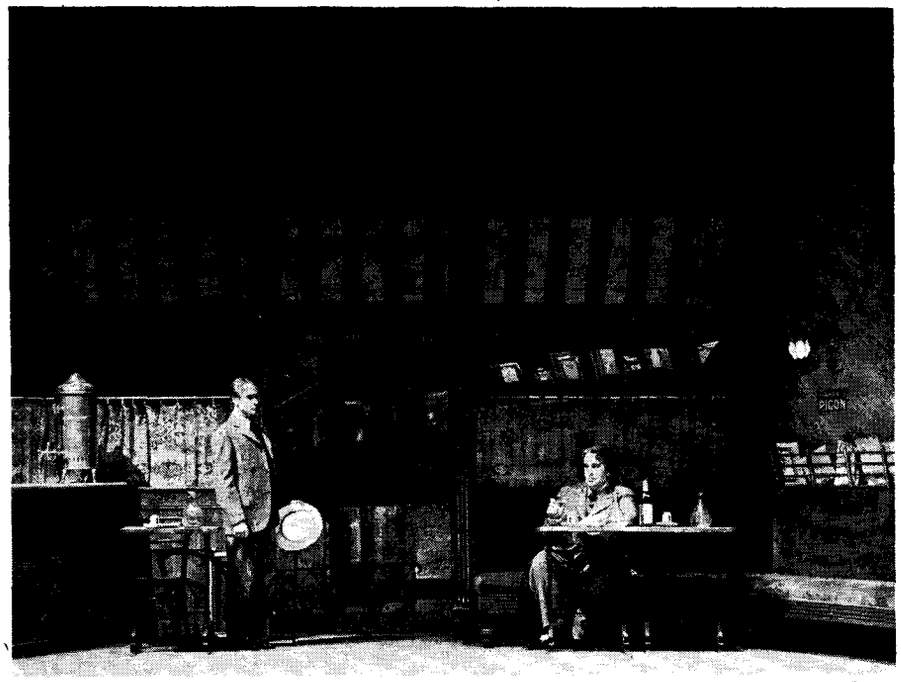
THE precipitous ups and downs of the theatrical terrain, on which the most experienced guides often remain lost for years at a time, are a little gloomily illustrated by the fates of Miss Dane's play and that of the Stokeses. Both have passed beyond the power of criticism to help or harm, the first—and better—by abject failure, the second by success with which no one could tamper. Before "Herod and Mariamne" opened and closed on the road, everybody hoped much for it; before "Oscar Wilde" became a sell-out at the Fulton Theater, it had fared very differently abroad.

It is, of course, easier now, in the lee of the event, to explain these matters. In Miss Dane's play, admirably written as it is, one can detect the seeds of failure which sprouted to make ruefully incongruous the prophecy committed to the dust-wrapper of the printed version by some anonymous seer: "Clemence Dane's new play, with Katharine Cornell in the magnificent role of Mariamne, is certain to be one of the outstanding theatrical events of this season," that one wrote, taking what amounted to a record leap into the dark. Well, Miss Cornell was in the role, all right, from Pittsburgh on, as far as the drama went. But the role was not magnificent. It is precisely there that Miss Dane took her major stumble.

Externally it is a role to entice any actress, partly because none of the other characters speak to, or about, Herod's queen without commenting favorably upon her beauty. She is beautiful and sad, and she dies, in a manner of speaking, for love. At any rate, she dies, as nearly as Miss Dane conveys it to this reviewer, to teach Herod a lesson about love; the lesson not to be jealous. Herod had the rather possessive habit, when he went himself into danger, of leaving behind instructions that his wife should be killed if anything happened to him. And when the queen learned of this, through the weakness of Herod's instruments, she was hurt. When Herod learned that she had learned, he could only conclude that she had beguiled her potential executioners with woman's way of beguilement.

It is psychologically a little intricate; it is psychologically even a little melodramatic, for a play which maintains a modern attitude. And also, for this reason and that, it leaves Mariamne rather unsympathetic; a little of the "you'll-be-sorry-you-did-this-to-me" type of suicide. Miss Cornell and the rest may have noticed this, on the road. They may also have noticed that, in spite of the literary excellence of the drama, most of its action does not take place within view of the audience. And that, generally, is fatal.

The Stokes play, for all its success, is synthetic on the page as it was, to me



Vandamm

Robert Morley (right) as Oscar Wilde. "When his troubles come, [the authors] dissolve in tears and sentiment" . . .

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Clemence Dane

among a few, on the stage. It is a sufficiently dextrous weaving together of selected Wilde epigrams for an act or so; then it is pathos over Wilde's fate. (At the Fulton it is also, importantly, extraordinarily good acting by Robert Morley.) Its major flaw, aside from the general flaw of lacking quality, is that the authors maintain no viewpoint toward their character. At the beginning, for a little while, they are good-humoredly detached toward Wilde, and faintly alert to his absurdities. But when his troubles come, they dissolve in tears and sentiment. They are, however, and as one reviewer so sweetly phrased it, "decent" about Wilde, which I think is very nice. I have been trying, too, to believe that it is this "decency" which has made the play so popular.

Mr. MacLeish's "Air Raid" is entirely another matter—a very fine and stirring matter. His poetry has, as it almost always has, a kind of stripped clarity, and it has strength and poignancy. A dozen times in the poem he has used the little things of life, so infinitely brief and touching, to sharpen and deepen his picture of catastrophe—"you watch for breaking war above the washing on the lines . . . our women die in peace beneath the lintels of their doors."

Mr. MacLeish calls his dramatic poem a "verse play for the radio," which is an all right thing to call it, particularly if it is to be read over the radio, as it was. What we mean by "radio plays" I can only guess; it is clear, however, that we do not mean plays. A poem does not, I'm pretty sure, become a play merely because it is, as one might say, scored for several voices. Mr. MacLeish, clearly one of our best poets, is not, in "Air Raid," any closer to the theater than he was, say, in "Panic." And that, although "Panic" appeared on the stage, was not very close.

Richard Lockridge is dramatic critic of the New York Sun.

"Reconstruction" in Mexico

A HISTORY OF MEXICO. By Henry Bamford Parkes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by ERNEST GRUENING

OF books on Mexico there has been a great profusion during the last decade, and the American reading public has had ample opportunity to become familiar with events below the Rio Grande. But excepting Charles W. Hackett's translation of Luis Parez Verdia's "History of Mexico," no full fledged history in the English language from the first migration of the Indian from Asia to his emergence as the result of an ethnic-social upheaval begun in 1910, has appeared since Priestley's scholarly "Mexican Nation: A History" in 1924. This carried the story through the anarchic phases of the revolution, that is to say, through the second decade of this century—the epoch of Madero, Huerta, Zapata, Villa, and Carranza—to the coming of relative peace and order with the advent of Obregon to the Presidency.

The chief justifications for a new historiography are either a new point of view, or new material, or perhaps a new form. Mr. Parkes brings no new point of view and has extracted no new material from the past. His work is based on secondary sources. However, there is new material in his carrying of the study up to the immediate present, including the oil expropriations. That permits him to deal with the eighteen years of "reconstruction" in continuity with all previous history. He can therefore develop the economic basis of the Revolution more fully than previous historians have.

Mr. Parkes's work deserves recognition also on other counts. It is accurate. While free from any marked bias, unless a generally "liberal" inclination may be so considered, it is not colorless. It characterizes men and events so that their quality is unmistakable. Above all it is extremely readable. And while it is a work of moderate size—perhaps 125,000 words—it is so well organized that little really essential appears to have been omitted. A great deal is often adequately presented by a few, vivid sentences.

The general viewpoint is sympathetic to the aspirations of the Mexican people for—well, let us say "the more abundant life" as it would be conceived by a great mass of long under-privileged, undernourished, and under-equipped Indians; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say as it is conceived for them by their contemporary caciques, often white, more generally *mestizo*, and seldom full-blood Amerind. Self-determination — ethnic, economic, social—would probably be the admitted aims of the revolutionary ideology. As for political self-determination, "Effective suffrage, no re-election," the gallant slogan from Madero to Calles, and always honored in the breach, no longer resounds. Elections in Mexico are what they have always been—self-ratification by the *caudillo*, the man on horseback.

Yet while sympathetic, Mr. Parkes in his closing chapters, "Cardenas" and "Conclusion," treads with creditable caution. Inevitably so, as contemporary events are too close for matured reflection and for perspective. In consequence, one finds in this "current events" ending—the essentially new material of the book—a slight diminution of the incisiveness which characterizes the account of preceding centuries and decades. Mr. Parkes has visited the Mexican scene and brings to his writing the useful equipment that comes with first-hand visual, aural, and olfactory contacts. But it is more difficult for one who has met the still functioning principals in an enterprise to be as objective as in his appraisals of dead or exiled men. And when contemporary policy cannot be gauged except by speculative prophecy, a tendency to wishful thinking is perhaps unavoidable. So in his concluding summation of the Mexican revolution, the outlines become blurred and wavering, generality replaces concrete fact, and hopefulness for the future, tangible achievement:

> What was important was the fact that twelve millions of its rural population were acquiring a new faith in the future, [writes Mr. Parkes] that its Indian races were developing a new spiritual dignity and independence.
>
> Here and there . . . model village communities, under the new social order which might one day spread through all Mexico . . . The steady growth of such communities during the twenties and thirties, the gradual leavening with these new hopes of the peasants who still worked for the *hacendados* or were victimized by the politicians were portents much more significant than the persistence of corruption and tyranny among the revolutionary chieftains. . . .

Perhaps. But "The Revolution" in Mexico is now in its twenty-eighth year. The same hopes were described and redescribed twenty, ten, and five years ago. The true story of why, after a generation of blood, anguish, and propaganda, they are still largely hopes, remains to be written—a pertinent and pressing question, particularly in view of the unusually favorable circumstances surrounding Mexico's rulers in the last ten years. That is the one important omission in Mr. Parkes's up-to-the-minute history.

Ernest Gruening, former newspaper man and editor, is director of the Division of Territory and Island Possessions, United States Department of the Interior. He is the author of "Mexico and Its Heritage" and "The Public Pays: A Study of Power Propaganda."

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Suggestion for 1939

NOT long ago we quoted on this page some comments made by E. B. White in *Harper's Magazine* about testimonial advertising. He called it "a rather cheap little conspiracy to debase the stature of man. . . . It elevates the spurious to a position of dignity in the community and proves that it pays not to care." Mr. White was talking about paid testimonials, written for money by celebrities—of one sort or another—about products which they may or may not use. He was not talking about that humbler form of testimonial, the blurb, the quotation from a review used without sordid remuneration to advertise a book.

Testimonial advertising for books is hardly to be called a conspiracy. It does not represent insincere opinions, bought and paid for. Rarely does a quotation from a review seriously misrepresent the review. Once in a long while a reviewer, writing an unfavorable notice, will include a phrase that can be lifted from its context, with a skillful manipulation of consecutive dots, and made to look like an excerpt from a blurb; but distortions of this kind occur too seldom in publishers' advertising to make any difference. Book reviewing is honest enough, as any enterprise which pays so badly must be. So is book advertising, for the same reason, among others. The trouble with testimonial advertising for books is something else.

The trouble is, quite simply, that it is not effective. There is a paradoxical element in the fact that paid testimonials sell cigarettes so much better than unpaid testimonials sell books. It seems to put a premium on insincerity and to provide one more sad commentary on the American character. We waive the opportunity of pursuing these reflections, however; the subject of this editorial is simply book advertising, and its point is merely to suggest that book advertising is too often dull, spiritless, and futile.

We requote at random a few "quotes" that appeared in the advertisements of our own Christmas issue. "A rich and satisfying book of reminiscences." "There is no other American love story to compare with it." "It's fascinating!" "Immensely readable . . . a warm-hearted, friendly book." "A tender, lovely, warm-hearted book." "A biography that is almost a model of its kind." "A grand story." "Historical truth stranger than most fiction." "A pleasant and heartening book." "Vivid—exciting—satisfying!" Each of the foregoing quotations was written by a reviewer, not by an advertising man. All were written about different books, even the fourth and fifth.

That suggests two points. (1) Reviewers do not write interesting ad copy. A good review, read as a whole, will convey the individual character of a book; an excerpt from a review always sounds like an excerpt from every review. (2) Quotes from reviewers make the reviews sound silly, and, what is worse, they make all books sound alike. Yes, we know all the reasons why publishers go on using quotes. The main reason is that quotes represent the independent opinions of people who have nothing for sale, whereas the publisher's own copy might be regarded as biased. But surely this reason is insufficient. Surely the practice does not result in selling enough books to justify itself. We know, too, that occasionally a reviewer will make a name for himself, like Phelps or Woollcott, and carry extraordinary influence for a while; but they are exceptional, and even in their cases the law of diminishing returns sooner or later sets in.

Every book published is published for some reason. Leaving aside standard merchandise, and occasional books which are issued for extraneous purposes, books in general are published because somebody in the publishing house is enthusiastic about them. Too often this enthusiasm gets mislaid between delivery of the MS and date of publication. No one ever hears what it was about the book that made it get under the editor's skin. It comes out as another "vivid book of reminiscences," another "novel that slices through the veneer of our civilization"—another book described to sound like twenty other books published the same week.

We are not asking for the moon, or even for the abandonment of quotes from reviews. Quotes are all right in a secondary function, to back up the publisher's own copy. All we ask is that not more than half of the copy in an ad for a new book be quoted from reviews. The first, and better, half should be written by the publisher and convey his own enthusiasm. Publishers are salesmen and reviewers are not, but publishers often scrap their own copy when a favorable review comes in. Publishers' ad men who use nothing but scissors and paste will eventually be replaced in a technical society by robots. (What reviewers will be replaced by, we have no means of determining.) In any case, we are in favor of the intelligent dissemination of reading —of getting the right books to the right people; and publishers' advertising has a definite place in the process.

Incredible End

BY SHIRLEY BARKER

THESE are the girls who read the "Gallic Wars"
When I was reading them, who ran with me
Across the hockey-field; they sit indoors
Tonight, and read a cooking recipe
Or mend a sock. The hips and bosoms flare
That I recall as angular and slim;
Wide eyes grow veiled beneath the accusing stare
Of wider eyes across a cradle's rim.

These are the men who had the mouths of boys
When I was learning how a boy's mouth felt
Upon my own. Now apathy employs
Their nights as trade their days; no friend can melt
The glaze of their indifference by asking
News of themselves. They only warm to me
After a glass has cheered them into basking
In piteous boasts of what their sons will be.

It does not grieve me that my father's friends
Are old men now with sinews lax and sprung,
But that my own companions fall on ends
Incredible last night when we were young.
This is the end of agony and wonder
Save through vicariousness; this is the pain
Of my green generation's plowing under
To feed the roots of man's eternal grain.

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Letters to the Editor: *The Indiana Scene; Authors and Editors*

Hoosier Footnotes

SIR:—May a Hoosier emigrant offer a footnote or two to Professor Cordell's admirable survey of Indiana literature? I do not know any more than he does why no Indiana author, resident or expatriate, has ever written a successful realistic novel about his native scene; the surprising thing is that hardly any has even tried. Some of David Graham Phillips's novels have part of their setting in Indiana, and draw on his memories of boyhood and college; but Phillips, who was a good (even if gaudy) reporter of New York and Washington, was unable to re-create an Indiana that was recognizable to anybody who had ever lived there.

The essential Hoosier character is much better represented by Abe Martin than by John Harkless or Daniel Voorhees Pike. To authors sprung from such a race the Indiana of the twenties, as Mr. Cordell suggests, should have been an irresistible temptation; yet only immigrants took a shot at it. McCready Huston (from Pennsylvania) drew in "Dear Senator" a truthful picture of the successful Indiana politician of the period, with a whole gallery of minor types. C. E. Scoggins (from Mexico) injected into "The Red Gods Call," a romance mostly set in Central America, some chapters about Muncie that are an illuminating supplement to what the Lynds wrote in "Middletown." But Huston quit writing novels, Scoggins stuck to Latin-American romance; and I know of no other artistic treatment of Indiana in that period except the murals of Thomas Hart Benton (from Missouri).

Perhaps the Hoosiers feel, as do some other people, that an art dependent on a public capable of understanding abstract symbols on the printed page is dying out. Certainly the most distinguished Indiana artists at the moment are Cole Porter and Carole Lombard.

ELMER DAVIS.

New York City.

Literary Prospecting

SIR:—Lying in bed yesterday with my larynx on "sit down strike" I read Mr. Sloane's "Literary Prospecting" in your December 3rd issue which had just come.

Soon I came on your list on page 12 and interested to see what in it I had read and what suggestions it had for me I started with my pencil to check it.

The list was spoiled. I was sorry I had read Mr. Sloane's article. More, I was sorry it had been written.

FREDERICK H. STRONG.

Portland, Oregon.

Alas, No Ivory Tower

SIR:—The disillusionment which Mr. Strong experienced after reading my article was nothing compared to my own remorse after seeing his letter. Inadvertently I seem to have unmanned one of the few extant cash customers for books, and I feel bad about that. But don't you think he would have found out about it sooner or later anyhow? A chance remark at a tea party, an unguarded comment by an author, editor, or reviewer, possibly even a note in Isabel Paterson's column, and the lamentable fact that books are not always the result of single-minded ivory-tower inspiration would have come home to him, and the mischief would be done. And what's so distressing about the knowledge that books are human artifacts which editors as well as writers have helped to shape? As for that list on page 12, I cast no smirch on the majority of those titles. I hope Mr. Strong will go back to them after the shock wears off, and buy one or more of them. They're all good books, no matter how they happened to come to print in the first place.

WILLIAM SLOANE.

New York City.

"Cedric hasn't done a stroke of work since we moved to the country."

Ma and Pa

Consider then the Purple Cow.
Who'd rather see than be one now?
For she alone could understand
The dreamy soul of Ferdinand.
The Purple Cow and he may laugh,
They ma-d and pa-d the Golden Calf.

J. EDGAR PARK.

Norton, Mass.

Mr. Weller and Miss Halsey

SIR:—After reading the Minority Report, by M. S. Packard, on page 9 of your issue of November 12, and "The British Read Halsey," by Irwin Edman on page 13, I got down "The Pickwick Papers."

To quote Mr. Grigg, who likes Pickwick, "No one writes like that any more."

In Chapter 17 of Volume III, Mr. Weller reveals to Sam his plan for helping Mr. Pickwick escape to "'Merriker," and adds, " . . . let him come back and write a book about the 'Merrikins as'll pay all his expenses and more, if he blows 'em up enough."

Dickens knew by experience, as did Mrs. Trollope, and Mrs. Basil Hall, not to mention their followers since.

MARY JOHNSTON.

MacMurray College,
Jacksonville, Ill.

Hamlin Garland

SIR:—I am writing a doctoral dissertation on the life and work of Hamlin Garland, a study which I intend to adapt for publication as a book. If any of your readers have letters or any other kinds of information regarding Mr. Garland, I should be grateful for the privilege of borrowing such items. I should pay all expenses incurred and should return all lendings promptly.

ELDON C. HILL.

English Dept., Miami University,
Oxford, Ohio.

Clarke's Portfolio

SIR:—James Freeman Clarke, the Transcendentalist, had a portfolio of "illustrations of the new philosophy," which in 1902 was in possession of his family. This portfolio contained caricatures of Emerson and Margaret Fuller. I am wondering whether there was also a caricature of Thoreau. Is there any reader of *The Saturday Review* who can tell me in whose possession this portfolio is?

HENRY S. CANBY.

Killingworth,
Clinton, Conn.

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Men and the Law

OUR ELEVEN CHIEF JUSTICES. By Kenneth Barnard Umbreit. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by WALTON H. HAMILTON

AN amphibious book is always a hazard. One that attempts to recite "the history of the Supreme Court" in terms of "the personalities of the chief justices" is a downright gamble. It is likely to forsake the air which mortals breathe without attaining the icy stratosphere of certainty whence cometh the law. In these lives, however, the earthly narrative swings low—and an occasional flight renders to the Eternal the things that are Its.

The very choice of the chief justices serves to put the two themes apart, for the careers of the eleven are not the history of the court. The first three—John Jay, John Rutledge, Oliver Ellsworth—spent their years elsewhere and left little impress upon the supreme law. Three of the others—Salmon Chase, William Howard Taft, Charles E. Hughes—tarried long in other arenas, and judicial office was but a twilight chapter to eventful busyness. Melville Fuller was never at home among the immortals; and, although Edward Douglass White thundered from on Sinai, somehow his commandments have faded. It was, then, only John Marshall, Roger Taney, Morrison Waite whose sustained tread moved along the path the court was taking. And, this trio aside, it was seldom the chief justice who shaped the stream of judicial opinion. Miller was of greater weight than Chase; Harlan and Brewer, alongside of Fuller, were giants; the word of Holmes prevails today over that of Taft; the fame of Brandeis and Cardozo will outwear that of Hughes. To get perspective Waite must be set over against Field and Bradley; even Taney must be placed in the midst of his brethren of iron will. Marshall alone moves in majestic stride in step with emergent doctrine. Thus most of the lawgivers are left out and each of the elect is allowed to wander wherever the events of his life takes him.

The Jays, staunch Church of England men, helped to promote a lottery to establish King's College—now Columbia University—as a citadel of the faith; the Livingstons, ardent Presbyterians, succeeded in having half the monies diverted to "another pest house." John Marshall loved Pope, could hardly await Sir Walter Scott's next, and chided Joseph Story because he cared more for Roman law than for Jane Austen. Roger Taney, author of the Dred Scott decision, was as bitter as Harriet Beecher Stowe against slave dealers, "those reptiles who live by trading in human flesh." Salmon Chase, long before the term "industrial revolution" had been coined, took a fling at "The Effects of Machinery" in the turgid Latinity which the *North American Review* served up as highbrow English. As a good Democrat Melville Fuller "unswervingly" clung to the simple creed of hard money, free trade, strict construction, and the straight ticket. These are fair samples, taken quite at random; the volume is a miscellany of just such pointed and wayward items. The author seldom ventures beyond the standard biographies; he takes no chance upon allowing his pen to be dulled by research. But, as a reviewer who turns his craft to account, he empties many books into a single tome.

And thus, too, the supreme law of the land escapes human bondage. If the annals of men are recorded, the heavens are kept always in view. The sublime purpose of "three Anglo-American revolutions" was to establish checks upon the power of Congress. Judicial review is the great event to which all creation has moved. The ensuing "system" works "according to logic, rather than passion"; it cannot be made "the agent of any political group." Yet, in some unexplained way, it is "peculiarly American." The great ordinances of government are timeless. History becomes revelation—and the eternal can be writ in no narrative. Eleven others, or still another eleven, and the result would have been the same. The Constitution is insulated against mortality.

It is a superb formula which thus denies to great men a causal part in legal creation. It preserves Justice from the taint of earth, makes secular the lives of jurists, and frees from sacrilege these five hundred pages. It enables the reverent spirit of George Bancroft to attempt the critical role of Charles Beard. The tales of men's deeds—even their doughty doings in dialectic—are told. Yet the higher law—as everlasting as it is American—is left to spin in its celestial orbit.

Walton H. Hamilton is on the faculty of the Yale School of Law.

Diplomatic Butterfly

PRINCESS LIEVEN. By H. Montgomery Hyde. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

SHE was born Dorothea Benckendorff, the second daughter of a Russianized German nobleman who had married one of the Grand Duchess Sophia's ladies-in-waiting. At fifteen she was married, at the Czar's instigation, to Prince Lieven, who was soon to become ambassador at the court of St. James. Her tastes, her inclinations, her education had fitted her for just such a life. She was an admirable hostess, witty, intelligent, and peculiarly sympathetic to men of political importance. All London was ravished by her charms. The Prince Regent, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Castlereagh were all captivated. Her husband was a stolid, commonplace fellow whose imagination could not cope with the high diplomacy of his position; in all but name Dorothea became the Czar's envoy. She supplied St. Petersburg with despatches of exceptional fullness, and she carried out her other ambassadorial duties with an *élan* that won her a host of friends and an equal host of enemies.

Princess Lieven: 'Sympathetic to men of political importance" . . .

Her brilliant volatility was insuppressible. At Aix she had met Metternich and had become, for a brief period, his mistress. Thereafter, she supplied Austria as well as Russia with complete *dossiers* on British events. It mattered little toward what ends her activities were pointed; she enjoyed the sense of power, she reveled in the feeling that she was directing the policies of the world's great men. Proud, self-centered, impervious to advice, she never realized that she was herself the dupe of the far-sighted diplomatic schemers whose plans she so unwittingly abetted. English statesmen found her wonderfully useful. Through her they could tell St. Petersburg and Vienna exactly what they wanted St. Petersburg and Vienna to hear. Unfortunately, Dorothea's restless ambitions could not resist interfering in England's domestic policies. She meddled once too often, and the Lievens had to be recalled.

Lytton Strachey played with her in an essay, but her full length biography appears here for the first time in English. It is a tribute to Dr. Hyde's skill and a compliment to the lady's vivacity that the book contains no dull moment. It is, throughout, gracious, polite, and amusing. With quiet humor it presents the life of an intellectual butterfly.

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"Genius of Deformity"

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC. By Gerstle Mack. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. $5.

Reviewed by AGNES MORGAN

MR. GERSTLE MACK'S biography of Cézanne, which appeared a few years ago, has already become a standard work of reference for American readers. He has now turned his apparently indefatigable talents to Toulouse-Lautrec and brought forth a volume as full and as carefully documented as the one on the Hermit of Aix.

Mr. Mack makes no pretense as to his own talents. He has clearly chosen to be a historian of artists rather than an art historian. Of esthetic analysis and critical comment he offers a minimum—and much of it is the quoted judgment of other writers. But of dates and data, newly verified or from hitherto unpublished and even unsuspected sources, there is a great deal.

The main facts of Toulouse-Lautrec's life are well known, his aristocratic lineage, the early misfortunes which left him a curiously deformed creature with the body of a man but the legs of a boy, and his later history in the cafés and brothels of Montmartre, which led to his final breakdown and death two months before his thirty-seventh birthday. This brief and colorful life has often been referred to in the most lurid language. Some of it has already become legend. Mr. Mack, through the completeness of his account, makes the life both more interesting and less lurid. He neither ignores nor glosses over the weaknesses and debaucheries, but he includes so many aspects of Lautrec's life that the weaknesses are seen in the perspective of the whole man, an artist of astonishing powers of observation, of multitudinous interests, of great enthusiasms, and, until the end, of tireless, almost feverish energy.

In his preface Mr. Mack points out that in all Lautrec's varied artistic production there is no pure landscape, no still life, no religious painting, and no abstract conception. There are only animals and people, the living creatures that he knew in the setting in which he knew them. It was from them that Lautrec received the inspiration for his pictures. It is to them or to accounts of them that Mr. Mack has gone for the material for his biography.

There is an unforgettable anecdote told by Yvette Guilbert who, momentarily forgetting his own appearance, protested against his distortion of her in some of his drawings. Annoyed by the drawings, she remarked, "Really, you are the genius of deformity." She writes, "In a voice as sharp-edged as a knife he answered, 'But —naturally!' " Yet even the most complete research has failed to reveal a single whining protest against the fate which turned him into a monster rather than a man. In fact the letters written to his friend Devismes between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, when he was recovering from his broken legs and surely growing in the knowledge that he would be for the rest of his life a deformed cripple, are astonishingly gay and charming, polished, natural, and witty. They give some hint of the winning and sprightly manner which later made him the focal point of conversational gatherings of painters, poets, musicians, sportsmen, and doctors,

Vizzavona

Yvette Guilbert: project for a poster, by Toulouse-Lautrec

gatherings in which his physical handicaps were overlooked or forgotten.

From Albi, Lautrec's birthplace, Mr. Mack has followed him to Paris. He has visited the many studios, recounted the checkered history of the various cafés and café-concerts, searched for the singers and dancers and learned their final and generally tragic histories.

Surely nowhere else in English and nowhere else in one book can one find so much about the strange, gifted, often hapless lot who made the night life of Montmartre in the nineties. We know that Cissie Loftus still mimics, and that, miraculously, Yvette Guilbert still sings —but to find Jane Avril still alive, a charity patient in an unnamed Paris retreat, is something of a shock, as it is to learn the destitute end of Le Goulue and the unhappy old age of cheerful Aristide Bruant.

While their histories can neither add to or detract from the final estimate of Lautrec's place as an artist, to know their names and talents and the circumstances of their lives adds to our knowledge of an epoch and to our interest in one of its most gifted artists. Fifty-eight plates and a considerable bibliography supplement the text and increase the value of the book.

Agnes Morgan is keeper of drawings at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University.

Danger Ahead?

THE GERMAN REICH AND AMERICANS OF GERMAN ORIGIN. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $1.50.

Reviewed by DAVID H. POPPER

SPONSORED by fourteen distinguished leaders of three faiths, including Nicholas Murray Butler, Felix Frankfurter, Monsignor Ryan, and Henry L. Stimson, this forty-five page book contains damning documentary evidence of the scope and nature of Nazi propaganda outside the Reich. By textual excerpts from both official and unofficial German pronouncements the underlying thesis of that propaganda is made abundantly clear: that, as the sponsors remark in a brief prefatory note, "a person of German descent is always a German and belongs to Germany." The Foreign Division of the National Socialist Party and the League of Germanism abroad have not been slow to draw the logical consequences from this racial doctrine. Germans living in other lands must do more than merely retain their cultural links with the Reich. They must be imbued with the National Socialist Weltanschauung. Their thoughts must be cast in the Nazi mold. They must be induced to further German political aims and German export trade. German teachers and German students in foreign lands must be correctly indoctrinated. For wherever there are Germans, national boundaries do not exist. All Germans, everywhere, are integrally united in a national community owing blind obedience to the Führer and his creed.

In the United States, according to Nazi sources, 8,000,000 persons fall within this category. The German-American Volksbund is striving to bind them to the Nazi chariot. It combats the Americanization of German youth. It prepares for a "coming struggle with Communism and Jewry" in America. The sponsors of this book are united in pointing out the possible outcome of such efforts: creation of a cyst in the body politic, of a group rendering primary allegiance to a foreign ruler and solidly opposed to the basic tenets of American liberal democracy. At present Nazi propaganda in the United States can be accounted almost a total failure. But it is well to have this warning that the Nazis are engaged in sabotaging American institutions from within.

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Ampersands

BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

JOURNEYS end in Lovers' Meetings: Old Years end in Season's Greetings &&& On the stream of Hitherhence, O 1939 Make Sense! &&& During 1938, Civilization had the Bends. We suggest that everyone try to use 1939 as a De-compression-Chamber. &&& Return to medievalism: one of New York City's most famous churches (we promised **not** to identify) had its lectern Bible stolen, and plans to buy a new one fastened with chains. &&& One of our favorites, Felicien Rops, Would cause Mr. Sumner to call the cops. &&& Few of the bright young people know him, Few of the bookstores dare to show him. &&& Anaesthetics are grand, said the Optimist as he came to; but what unpleasant after-effects they have. &&& We always think of Days as street-crossings: this is the corner of December Avenue and 31 Street: the traffic light is yellow: but is it changing from red to green—or from green to red? &&& "To a bookseller's" (said Mr. Pepys, in 1660) "and bought for the love of the binding, three books." &&& Epitaph for a Popular Novelist: *Here lies one whose name was writ in slush.* &&& Epitaph for a Great Poet—by Alice Meynell, one her-self—*He rushes on my mortal guess With his immortal things.* &&& Epitaph for a Tabloid Editor: *He cast husks before swine.* &&& Epitaph for a Satirist: *So what?*

&&& The goofier the Germans get the more we think of Hauff's fairy tales, delight of our youth. &&& We have been amused in recent years at all the tarantara about Paul Bunyan the giant lumberman, because Hauff—who also lived *in schwerer Zeit* and died at 25—told the same yarns in his grand fable *Das Kalte Herz,* more than a hundred years ago. &&& We were astonished to be told by a Catholic priest that the most modern cassocks are now made with zippers. &&& Among the mem-orabilia of the year: the advertisement in the Christmas *Illustrated London News* recommending gas-proof kennels for dogs and cats.

&&& Project for the Future: try to do away with international grade-crossings. &&& Things that occurred to us at Christ-mas Time as worth rereading: *Little Es-says* by George Santayana (chosen by L. P. Smith). &&& *Autobiography of Montaigne* by Marvin Lowenthal. &&& *Thoughts on the State of Being Hung Over* by Westbrook Pegler, perhaps the supreme expression in literature of the Perfect Passive Participle of the verb to lush. We can't remember whether Mr. Pegler has reprinted this in one of his books or not; if not, don't write to us, write to Scribners and supplicate. &&& *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle* (in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*) is apt for this season. &&& *They Return at Evening,* by H. R. Wakefield, one of the few volumes of grislies which are really witty; and let's write to Appleton-Century wondering why they don't pub-lish another book by Mr. Wakefield. &&& Briefest history of Democracy: the statesman says, in reply to a committee urging action on a needed reform: "It's a fine idea: Put Pressure on me." &&& We were pleased by a poem that reached

Munkacsi

1939?

us from a place delightfully named Little Silver (New Jersey), as follows:—

Genetics

Alas, the poor Nordic is purely a myth!
So let us erect him a huge monolith;
For, in spite of the eloquent speeches of Hitler,
Man's faith in the Nordic grows daily much littler;
Science says the pure Nordic is surely a myth,
His kin being terribly mixed with his kith.

AVERY L. GILES.

&&& The experienced commuter, pick-ing a seat in the train, chooses to share with someone who doesn't sprawl but sits well over. If only nations could do the same in choosing their neighbors. &&& To adapt a historic parliamentary motion: The power of Bunk has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. &&& We hope for a diminishment of same in 1939: which year is to numerologists the Double Electrical Eleven. &&& Our most pleasing bookshop find lately was, for 15 cents, at the Franklin Bookshop in Philly, a copy of *The Old Red Sandstone,* the Boston edition of 1854. This book, a byword in its day, was by the Scottish stonemason-geologist Hugh Miller, but remembered now mostly by an allusion in Bret Harte's *Society upon the Stanislaus:* "A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the abdomen." &&& Our copy carries also the N. Y. imprint of "Sheldon, Lam-port, and Blakeman." When will someone do us a good piece on Forgotten Pub-lishers?

&&& One of the truly memorable tri-umphs of 1938 was *Days in Old Spain,* by Gertrude and Muirhead Bone; pub-lished lately by Macmillan in London and presumably due here soon. Sir Muir-head's superb impassioned drawings give us a lasting vision of the pre-War Spain, most of it now gone forever. Sir Muir-head and Lady Bone had just finished ten years' devotion in putting Old Spain on paper when the civil war began. This is not just a book but testimony by a re-cording angel. &&& When young people wonder why anyone should study Latin we remember old Doctor Johnson, who had a stroke (at the age of 74). He uttered a prayer that at least his mind might be spared and sitting up in bed (in the middle of the night) "to try the integrity of my faculties" he made his petition in Latin. &&& A beautiful subject for some artist to portray. &&& Speaking of art, we are pleased to find Eric Gill saying "Drawing from life properly comes late in life rather than early. For the training of imagination is the first thing to be seen to."

&&& We know a young Florida cracker, exile from warmer latitudes, who is working at a Long Island garage. When he came up to put chains on a car in a day of snowstorm he lamented "My blood is so thin, this weather gets right at me." &&& We discovered, by what used to be called hobbing and nobbing, that whiskey is an excellent coagulator. &&& We saw a note in a newspaper that the portrait of ex-President Benes has been ordered removed from the Czecho-Slovakian le-gation in Washington. Suggest that the University of Chicago, where he is going to lecture, make a bid for it. &&& Dentists frequently remark that plain salt-solution is better for teeth and gums than the soapy scented pastes. The analogy is true in literature also. &&& We end the year remembering it is a twelvemonth since Don Marquis died. The other day we got a letter from a correspondent whose judgment we respect: he said: "I have reread Don Marquis's *The Almost Perfect State* with much more affection and ap-preciation than ever before. And how much admiration too for his being able to do so much, so well, in the given medium [viz, the newspaper column]. Not Greek, but one of the noblest Romans, *integer vitae;* and partaker (as he says in his best poem) of the great simplicity."

&&& The crossgrained old client who signs himself "E. Tenebris Lux, Harvard '02" is still trying to get us in wrong with

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the Trade. In the early days of this department he often used to ejaculate something indiscreet about the end of every year, and suddenly he reappears. &&& "Did it ever occur to you," he writes, "how vulgar is a library consisting entirely of new books? How pleasant to see shelves filled with good old shabby backs, testifying long use and a family that had curiosity for things of the mind. Where I was reared (in a Rhode Island parsonage) books meant something: we couldn't buy many, and for entertainment we had the circulating library. That was how I got the idea that a bookstore that deals only in new books is a parvenu kind of place, and a Man of Feeling always frequents the secondhanders. There is more joy in heaven over one old copy of Hazlitt, foxed and shaken, than in any number of new volumes still smelling of wood-pulp and binder's glue. Why do the literary journals say so little in honor of man's only nirvana, the Secondhand Bookstore?" &&& We shall forward Mr. Lux's letter to the Mendoza Boys on Ann Street, wishing them—and all other secondhanders—a Happy New Year.

Pictures and Censorship

(*Continued from page 4*)

censorship really rests: the men who make the movies—not the subordinate producers, directors, and writers, but the heads of production, the studio bosses.

Those who rail against Breen and the Hays Office are myopic. Breen merely expresses the will of the Hays Office, and the Hays Office merely expresses the will of the industry's leaders. Breen may cramp the style of those who like to think of themselves as creators; his rules may result in the moral and material standardization of the Hollywood product; efforts to evade his rulings may lead to dramatic dislocation and distortion; his influence may encourage producers to take refuge in easy and monotonous formulas; love on the screen, under Breen, may be reduced largely to puppy love, with supposedly mature men and women giving faithful imitations of adolescents by pulling one another's hair, kicking one another's shins, knocking one another down, and throwing one another into swimming pools. But, when we begin to talk of picture censorship and of the effect of censorship upon pictures, we cannot stop with Breen and the Hays Office. We are led straight to the top, to the men who control the making of the movies. For this censorship, in its largest and most minute manifestations, is nothing but a reflection of their greeds and fears. And it is this self-censorship, this Origen-like operation which the industry has performed upon itself, that makes most Hollywood pictures the emasculated, empty, and meaningless things they are.

Every organization, union, and pressure group in the country has its say as to what may or may not be shown on the American screen, and Hollywood lends a respectful and fearful ear to all voices. These groups apply pressure at the source, whenever they get wind of anything of which they disapprove (one ludicrous instance is the howl that was raised by the glass-blowers when they learned that a picture was going to show people drinking beer from cans), or later at the box-office, whenever their guard is unexpectedly passed. But they need to be constantly less wary, for the producers have developed a prescience that anticipates almost their every wish and whim. *Thou shalt not offend* . . . Never was a commandment better learned.

It is impossible to deal with a contemporary issue without offending somebody, so contemporary issues are taboo, and Hollywood films are innocent of current significance. No subject with two sides—that is the rule of the studios. When they do touch a contemporary theme, they are careful to see that it is "safe," non-controversial. Warner's felt that it could afford to make "Black Legion," for example, because the picture would condemn an organization that was universally condemned. Yet Warner's was widely praised in Hollywood for its "courage" and its "daring," and one production head was heard to remark: "The Warners can monkey with dynamite if they want to. I don't!" The innocuous "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" was, of course, another instance of exceptional daring, for it actually admitted that there are those who have and those who have not; but the "comedy angle" was entrusted with the burden of blanketing the picture's more serious implications, and it was made plain that, even though he managed to keep out of the looney bin, Mr. Deeds himself, however lovable, was just a bit on the soft and cuckoo side.

Just as they walk timorously at home, so do the movie-makers look timorously abroad, and the result of their looking is the barring from the screen of any dramatic subject that conceivably could be offensive to any foreign power, and the elimination from all pictures of any scenes, characters, or dialogue that could possibly be deemed offensive by those same powers. The governments of the larger countries have their lynx-eyed agents in Hollywood, and Los Angeles is considered a very important consular post. The agents make their wishes plain, while seldom committing them to writing; and they do not have to be so lynx-eyed, really, for the studios almost invariably met them more than half-way. The upshot is that every foreign government exercises its own brand of censorship within the borders of the United States, has its say not merely as to what its own nationals may see on the screen, but as to what American audiences may see; for the pictures that are disapproved are simply not made. So we are confronted by the interesting and rather startling fact that American picture-fare for Americans is subject to the control of London, Rome, Berlin, Paris, and other foreign capitals. (News-reels, it should be noted in passing, are comparatively free from foreign interference, but still far from untouchable. *Vide* the recent case of an American newsreel, from which "statements by two prominent Englishmen critical of Prime Minister Chamberlain's policy" were excised, as a result of Ambassador Kennedy's action as a friendly intermediary between His Majesty's Government and the Hays Office.)

Our domestic screen is censored from abroad. A story dealing with the life of a German family under Hitler might furnish superb and moving drama; but Americans can't have it. They have been denied "Paths of Glory" because the French government has withheld permission for its production. Ataturk kept

Columbia

"The innocuous 'Mr. Deeds Goes to Town' was, of course, another instance of exceptional daring" . . . (Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur in "Mr. Deeds.")

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"Forty Days of Musa Dagh" from the screen, and now that he is dead, there is renewed talk of its being made; but you may be sure that it won't be, if Kemal's successor says no. "Devil's Island" is in the can, but French pressure is at least delaying its release. The *Hollywood Reporter* recently announced that Paramount would not remake "Shanghai Express" because "the Chinese consul refused to clear it." England decreed that in the new edition of "Dawn Patrol" there should be no disparaging remarks about war. And for years every studio has veered away from the story of Texas and the Alamo, because "it couldn't be made without putting the Mexicans in a bad light."

Every so often a top producer indulges in brave talk, but performance does not follow. Zanuck was all steamed up over making a picture that would glorify the defense of the Alcazar, until somebody whispered to him that the defenders were fascists. Goldwyn got pages of publicity by buying "The Exiles," but the story is shelved, and "no picture on a similar theme is contemplated." Wanger announced that he was going to do a great picture of the Spanish War, but the writers were ordered to make the contending sides "unidentifiable" (imagine "War and Peace" written under similar instructions—or "Man's Hope"!), and, for all the ballyhoo engineered by Wanger's publicity department, and even though it was picketed when it opened at Radio City Music Hall in New York, "Blockade" turned out to be just another mediocre spy picture. "Idiot's Delight" has resulted in a succession of headaches for Metro, thanks to Il Duce, and the picture is now being laid in a nameless country, of which the language is our old friend Esperanto. (Every country is, of course, careful to see that its people do not appear upon the screen as "heavies," and some, including Italy, object to their being seen as "comics." It has been said that the perfect screen heavy should be American, white, a member of no union, religious faith, or fraternal body, unemployed, and over twenty-one. But it would be convenient if Hollywood could arrange with some small country to lend its nationality to all unpleasant picture characters. Perhaps Liechtenstein would make a deal. Or Prague might be tempted, if it loses a little more territory.) Before leaving this rewarding topic, it should be mentioned that Warner's has announced a picture to be called "The True Story of a Nazi Spy." One wonders what it will be like. Perhaps Hitler will prove the witless liberator of an industry. But cynicism, at this point, is excusable.

Thou shalt not offend . . . But it is impossible to say anything without offending somebody. So Hollywood has made it a rule to say nothing. It is a rule that has been dictated by business policy, for the movie-makers are business men and nothing else, as they are prompt to state. But even they must admit that there are bad business men as well as good, and they must be beginning to wonder if their policy of saying nothing can be continued with profit. The foreign markets, for which they have sacrificed so much, are drying up behind barbed-wire fences; the American public, each member and interest of which has been so delicately coddled, is proving faithless to the films. One would think that the lines of moviegoers waiting to see "The Citadel" would give these business men pause. This picture says little enough, and no story could be more hackneyed than that of the earnest young doctor who is temporarily corrupted by fashionable success; but it does say something, and the public is obviously so grateful for that something. (King Vidor, who made the film in England for Metro, has asserted that it could not have been made in Hollywood, that it would have been killed in conference.) One would think that the success of "Grand Illusion," leaping the bar of language, would give them pause. It is crude and cheaply made and technically deficient, but all has been forgiven it,—because it says something. The truth that underlies the present troubles of the movie-makers, that explains the falling away of the public from the box-office, would seem to be so simple. It is only this: If you say nothing, no one will listen to you long. Even if you seek to be merely entertaining, you must say something, just a little something. Fortunately for you, gentlemen of Hollywood, the American public has been very patient,—or perhaps it has been very backward. In any case, you must at least keep abreast of it.

But the sad fact is that most of the studio heads in Hollywood made their money and rose to power when the picture business was a pushover, when anything on film showed a profit. Too many of them are still thinking in the terms of those days. "Showmanship" and "entertainment" are among their favorite words, but it may be that they know little or nothing of either, because they have never been compelled to learn in a competitive school. They command the greatest aggregation of artistic and technical talent that has ever been gathered together on the earth's surface, but perhaps they haven't the faintest notion of how to employ it. They command the most powerful medium of expression that has ever been known in the history of the world, but it is just possible that they do not know that they are using this medium to say nothing. It may be possible, even, that they have nothing to say. And, if these things are so, they need not worry about the future of pictures, for they will have nothing to do with it.

Ben Ray Redman, who is known to SATURDAY REVIEW *readers in other connections, recently completed a two-year term of duty as executive assistant to the head of one of Hollywood's major studios.*

Watcher of the Skies

THE CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER AND I. By William Emerson Ritter. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE

ONE of the disadvantages of bird watching in California, I find, is the density of the bush of dwarf-tree growth called chaparral. Evergreen, it lets you, at no season, have a good, clear vision of birds. I had just been out in my own chaparral patch when this book came to the door. And as it happened I had been watching woodpeckers in a dead oak and wondering what was betokened by their bobbing and curtsying, their knocking and calling, their sidling together only to sidle ceremoniously around each other, and their partings and criss-cross flights from tree to tree. My ignorance, and the chaparral, prevented me from answering my own questions.

I found out, when I read the first half of Mr. Ritter's book, everything I could have wished to know. For it is nothing but woodpecker business, and they have no business, surely, that has not been spied upon by the author. His minute-by-minute diary seems to have been running on for years. No scrap of privacy can be theirs.

So far the book is a naturalist's book. Then it becomes a philosopher's, a psychologist's book, and the book of a deep, bold, and winning thinker. Mr. Ritter, the "I" of the title, has subtitled his essay " 'A Study in Comparative Zoölogy.' In which are set forth numerous facts and reflections by one of us about both of us." "I" then proceeds to analyze himself—in the light of woodpeckers. Absurd, and absolutely right, I believe. This is the way to think, my brethren. This is the reason for studying woodpeckers. It is also one reason for being a man. So the second half of the book is, in concept, nothing short of brilliant.

The execution is pardonably less shining than that. The author has included not only his thoughts but all the machinery of the processes by which he reached his conclusions. His vocabulary is very highly trained, and his self-expression exceedingly fluent. But our understanding would have been the gainer if he had compelled himself to utilize, instead of over-extended exposition, the telling incident that tells more than it says, the one ringing phrase that would clench a Rig Veda of truths, the truth revealed like scenery by a lightning flash.

But behind a dense growth of verbal chaparral moves a personality that is much more exciting than woodpeckers. Mr. Ritter is more cultivated and genuinely thoughtful than most men of science. He is not afraid of beauty or spirit. He should write, if more concisely and less precisely, much more—in order to let us see him full-length, and boldly.

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British Institutions

PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND. By Harold Laski. New York: Viking Press. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by HARVEY C. MANSFIELD

SEVENTY-ONE years ago Walter Bagehot gave the English people the first incisive account of the actualities of their government, in a book that laymen could read. It was a pioneer work which, by grasping trends not yet exhausted, had an influence on the course of development of the very institutions it described. It is Harold Laski's purpose to rewrite Bagehot for our generation. In the large, he has succeeded. His book is worthy of its author's talents, and of its theme.

The revision was much needed. The past seven decades have brought profound alterations in the English constitution: universal suffrage has come; party lines have drawn taut; the cabinet has risen to supremacy; administration and administrative law have become the primary tools of government; the Lords have been curbed; the monarchy has grown in popularity as it has shriveled in power. The ancient bottles are there, but the vintages they hold are new. The problems to which governmental action is addressed are the spawn of a new civilization.

One must not ask at this date for pioneering in a field now so diligently cultivated. The factual materials are known to special students; in particular, Ivor Jennings's recent "Cabinet Government" leaves little unsaid that can presently be said. Laski's contribution is effective statement and understanding. None but the specialist will read Jennings, while the same audience that Bagehot reached is, *mutatis mutandis,* within Laski's hearing; and this can hardly be said of others who have shot at the same mark.

Following Bagehot's lead, he undertakes two things, an interpretive description of institutions as they work, and an examination of the tacit assumptions that underlie them, together leading to the question, can parliamentary government survive?

On the first head there can be little but admiration to express. The intricate adjustment of working parts in a complicated mechanism has nowhere been more illuminatingly portrayed. When he disputes the conclusions of others, or criticizes institutions, or suggests modifications of detail, his ground is well taken. But the tone is that of an observer throughout, and it is plain that on the whole he looks with approval upon the governmental system he describes. On the side of omission, he has nothing to say of the conventions that govern the press, nor of the control of access to the radio.

His second aim is to relate the nature of the constitution to the possible political future. The first prerequisite of parliamentary government is a common agreement among the parties on fundamentals, leaving to partisan warfare only those lesser issues about which, in Balfour's phrase, men "can safely afford to bicker." In theory the rules of the game permit an electoral majority ultimately to have its way. They also permit time-consuming checks to be interposed. In practice the checks are all in the possession of the Conservative party, which is thus permanently in power whether in or out of office. This was all very well under a capitalist economy and a restricted franchise. Will the rules continue to be respected when a Labor mandate seeks the surrender of that which Conservatives cannot "safely concede"—private ownership—and puts in jeopardy what they hold dearer than parliamentary government?

In this context Laski is writing a manual for socialists against a repetition of the crisis of 1931. The event was inconclusive then. Conservatives did not have to make the fatal choice, for it was Ramsay MacDonald who broke the rules for them and by his "betrayal" dissolved the uneasy alliance he headed. One wonders whether it may not prove so again. On his own showing there can be but one answer to Laski's question if party differences become irreconcilable. He implies that the test may come when Labor gets a clear majority. But the advent of a revolutionary crisis depends more upon the tempo of Conservative movement. The leadership of that party may be plutocratic, but the votes that keep it in power come from all classes. There are none more suspicious of "radicalism," moreover, than the trade unionists. Until the Conservative program loses the common touch, parliamentary government seems likely to endure.

Harvey C. Mansfield is assistant professor of government at Yale.

Divorce and the Code

ROYAL REGIMENT. By Gilbert Frankau. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1939. $2.50. (*Published Jan.* 3.)

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

MAJOR THOMAS ROCKINGHAM is the flawless British officer, the perfect exemplar of the public school-Sandhurst creed. He is exactly what his father has been before him, exactly what his brothers in their respective branches of the service are, the soul of honor, high-minded, self-sacrificing, comfortably secure in his acceptance of the moral code that governs the ruling class. He has served with distinction throughout the war, and at the age of fifty-odd in the early months of 1936 is patiently waiting for the military advancement which he has long deserved. But the conventional pattern of his life is abruptly disarranged by an ethical problem which threatens to wreck his career: he falls in love with his Colonel's American wife, the more than Vergilian Camilla.

Gilbert Frankau

Mr. Frankau himself labels this book "a novel of contemporary behaviors." The description fits. It is an observant chronicle of Major Rockingham's behavior under circumstances which his standards and background make peculiarly difficult. Has he the moral right to break from the gentleman's tradition, to forget his duties to the army, even for a love that is wholesomely genuine? Can he be sure of happiness once he has meddled in the unsavory procedure of the divorce courts? These are the questions which he and Camilla, after much heart-searching and tribulation, answer with a great show of proud determination and noble sacrifice; the problems which Mr. Frankau solves with cunning and complacent orthodoxy. Over this brave theme of renunciation runs another, like a sad obbligato to a stalwart melody; that of another lovers' tangle, contemporaneous and almost exactly similar, but resolved in a wholly different fashion. Major Rockingham, lonely but exalted, hears the broadcast of the abdication speech, and the thought races through his mind, "There, but for the grace . . ." To what canon of good taste this is consonant Mr. Frankau may know.

Apart from its moral implications, the novel commands respect for its skillful construction, the work of a highly practised hand. Its style, though overburdened with *clichés* and tiresomely reiterative of set phrases, is easy and effective.

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An English Publisher in New York

BY JOHN HADFIELD

AS a British publisher who has just completed a second term of transatlantic studies, I find it difficult to respond readily when asked to say what my impressions of America are. I am beginning to know how much I do not know. Self-denied the easy pleasure of the swift survey in two thousand words, or indulgence in easy 10-point generalizations, what can one say?

One can say with some certainty, I suppose, that Howard Spring's "My Son, My Son" has sold ten times as many copies in the United States as it has in England. So also has John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men." One can say that there are at least twice as many literary agents in New York as in London, and that twice as large a proportion of them are women. One can say that the physical make-up of American novels, in comparison with English, is higher, wider, and handsomer. One can say that bookstores are probably three times as frequent in the streets of New York as they are in the West End of London. . . . That your novels are 25 per cent more costly than ours, though your biographies and travel books are often cheaper. That no publisher in England has thought it expedient to issue his 10s. books at 9s. 7d. or his 5s. books at 4s. 11d., though hundreds of good, modern, paper-bound books are on sale in England at 6d. (which is about 12 cents). That the English-born critic, William McFee, now appears to be more American than the Americans, while the greatest living English poet is T. S. Eliot. That the Book-of-the-Month Club has at least twelve times as many members as its English counterpart, the Book Society. That most London publishers start and end their day's work half an hour later than the publishers in New York; but both take long week-ends. That in England an Editor is known as a Reader, an "advance" (sale) as a "subscription"; and "digest" is purely a medical term. But these facts, though they may amuse a few people, or may suggest malice toward some, can scarcely be formulated into a "tendency" or "trend."

As recently as ten years ago it was exceedingly difficult to sell books by contemporary American writers to readers in Great Britain. Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and in lesser degree Edith Wharton and perhaps Joseph Hergesheimer, were about the only living Americans who commanded an extensive British public. During the last decade there has been a great change. Hemingway showed that he could punch the fiercer English novelists right out of the ring, and, in consequence, there came a vogue for "tough" transatlantic novels in England, which reached its height in the great success of "The Postman Always Rings Twice." Today this vogue is waning a little, but there is still an appreciative public for such books as "I Can Get It for You Wholesale" or the novels of Horace McCoy; and as a backwash from the turgid mainstream has come the quiet conquest of Great Britain by Damon Runyon.

"Anthony Adverse" was the first of the long romantic novels to make a triumphant crossing of the Atlantic. Since then "Gone with the Wind" and "Northwest Passage" have repeated their American successes in England. Moreover, it is not merely the proved American best-seller that appeals to English readers. I was told last summer by two publishers' salesmen in London that they could sell twice as many copies of a promising first novel by an unknown American writer as they could of an equivalent English novel.

The average American first novel, crude though it may sometimes seem in comparison with the deadly competence

Wachsteter

American conquers England: Damon Runyon

and suavity of so much English work, has more punch and earnestness. Young Americans write as if they believe in something, even though they may only believe in themselves. Young English writers are all too often inhibited by a fear of being enthusiastic, of "giving themselves away." This is partly a delayed reaction from the War of 1914-18 (and it must be remembered that many English writers were killed in the War who would now have been in full maturity) and it is partly the effect of our living for so many years on the verge of international conflict.

There is yet another cause of the popularity of American literature, especially fiction, in England today. Ten years ago the idiom and social background of American life seemed remote and unreal. (It must be borne in mind that scarcely one English visitor comes to the United States for every three Americans who visit England.) During these ten years, however, the talkies have come into being, and have entered everyone's life. In consequence, American speech and idiom are now familiar to almost every English person. Manhattan, Chicago, Los Angeles can be visited twice a week in the local cinema. American fiction, therefore, has come to have more meaning, to be less remote in feeling and scene, to present problems and people with whom English readers can more readily identify themselves.

What features in the New York literary landscape impressed me most during my visit in October of this year? First, I noticed a quickening of the drift away from British literature (if I may use that unpleasing term to mark a distinction from the common denominator, *English* literature). By general observation, and also in endeavoring to sell British books to American publishers, it was impressed on me that the American public is no longer absorbing British literature as readily as it has done in the past. The time-honored formulas of squire and parson, park and cottage, church and pub, towns and downs, nurse and child, the Mall and suburb, and all those social and personal relationships that are peculiarly English are being displaced by typically American formulas—racial, regional, historical. That the balance of cultural trade is now being readjusted, and that America is fast winning a bloodless War of literary Independence, are historic facts—and, indeed, historic necessities.

At this point I make a criticism. One of the most noticeable features in the literary field at present is the large outcrop of American historical fiction. Three out of five of the larger and more important novels I read while I was in New York this fall were historical. Now this in itself is unobjectionable. America has a wealth of history yet to be put into literary form. It is admirable that the early settlement of California, the Civil War, the development of New England, and such subjects should be recreated in fiction, and it is natural that many people in the districts concerned should want to read such books. But I submit that although many of these 600-page sagas may be widely read and praised in the United States, a more definitive and fair assessment of their value will be made in Great Britain. English readers, who enjoyed "Gone with the Wind" and "Northwest Passage," are favorably disposed to such books. But if the successors to those best-sellers fail to reach the required standards of narrative interest, characterization, and form, the British critics will not excuse them, nor the public read them, on account of subject interest alone.

There is another typical literary product of today which I find unexportable —the regional novel. But this is something about which I, as an Englishman, am not qualified to give a critical opinion. English readers will not read them in any numbers; but nor would I expect American readers to continue reading earthy novels of East Anglia, misty stories from the Highlands, or faerie tales from the Welsh borders.

Where American novelists seem to me to be slow to take their opportunity is in the sphere of contemporary economic life and sociology. The United States have not as extensive and aged a historical background as Great Britain, France, Italy, or Germany. But they have a con-

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temporary social structure which is enormously impressive and an industrial and economic vitality which puts the Old World to shame. Why are not these subjects written about more often? Mechanical progress, the working out of democracy, the evolution of colloquial language (Elizabethan in its imagery and slang), the adjustment of racial conflicts, the achievements and problems of the W.P.A., the war between radicalism and technocratic capitalism, the rise of the C.I.O.—these are some vital subjects, of great interest to English readers, which do not seem to me to have had adequate attention from the imaginative and interpretive writers of America.

Can it be that literature on these themes is only possible, on an adequate scale, when the conflicts they involve are recollected in tranquillity? It may be so. Certainly one potentially important novel on a contemporary theme, which I read in New York two months ago, was artistically ineffective and unworthy of its author's undoubted gifts and promise. On the other hand the one novel of the Fall season which set my publishing enthusiasm alight was a story about the adjustment of man to the machine, an essentially modern and American novel, Wessel Smitter's "F.O.B. Detroit." And another author who stirred my emotions and has achieved (for me) a rare synthesis of art and experience, is a writer of short stories about poverty, unemployment, and industrial sociology—Albert Maltz, who has since won, I see, the first prize in the O. Henry Short Story Award.

The senior writers like Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis appear to have done their best work. And so many of the next generation, who ought to be approaching their creative zenith, seem to be making little progress. A friend of mine expressed it like this: "There are scores of brilliant and promising young writers in America today; but there are very few writers who are developing and increasing their stature with maturity." Why? I am not in a position to know, but I can see two possible reasons, petty reasons perhaps, and not general in their application. The huge rewards and temptations offered to promising writers by the magazines and the movie industry seem to me to be dangerous to American literature. In England these temptations have not been nearly so attractive, and, as a result, such few really promising authors as appeared in the nineteen-twenties (e.g. H. E. Bates, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh) have progressed fairly steadily in their work.

Of contemporary American poetry I am not qualified to express an opinion, because it is almost completely unknown in England, and it would be fantastic to expect to learn much about it during five weeks of hotel life in a vastly hospitable city like New York.

In considering biography and works of travel I confess I retain a thoroughly British prejudice and skepticism. While American biographers excel in interpreting their own heroes, and the American researcher into literary history surpasses all others in care, industry, and detective ability, I am inordinately suspicious of American biographies in general. The intense and typically American interest in notable personalities has been too often catered for by a bastard product that is neither biography nor fiction, but an unsatisfactory amalgam of the two. The influence of Lytton Strachey and Emil Ludwig has been even more unfortunate in America, I fear, than in Europe. And the formula for American travel books (with some outstanding exceptions such as Mrs. Lindbergh's work) appears to consist in equal parts of facetiousness and "glamour." Am I right?

After those rude words let me hasten to add that in three other departments current American writing seems to me brilliantly successful. America has invented (or perhaps clothed in new dress) the first-personal history. In England, reminiscence and autobiography had sunk to a low level when suddenly there came a rush of vivid, unsentimental personal narratives by American writers—mostly newspaper men. They have been

Emmanuel Levy

Englishman conquers America: Howard Spring

widely read in England, and have put new life into autobiography. In foreign reporting, too, America has shown that its alert and competent news-gatherers can make literature of topicality.

Finally, humor. In what country today can we find such variety and originality of humorous writing as is provided by James Thurber, Dorothy Parker, Frank Sullivan (whose "Weekend at Lady Astor's" is the definitive word on British politics), Gene Fowler (whose "Salute to Yesterday" approaches Quixotic heights), the creator of Hyman Kaplan, Damon Runyon, E. B. White—but the list goes on and on; the only other name I will mention is that of the man who has broadened the scope (and expanded the meter) of poetry as no contemporary highbrow experimentalists have done; I mean, of course, Ogden Nash.

Is America's literature in good health? To this final and comprehensive question I have no hesitation in answering Yes. I prophesy, indeed, that America's literature will soon be very much more healthy than the bodies of America's citizens. Ninety-nine out of every hundred American doctors seem to be so busy writing books that there must be but little time left over for their professional duties.

Mr. Hadfield is editor of J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.

Why Nazis Are Nazis

WHY HITLER CAME INTO POWER. By Theodore Abel. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by HENRY C. WOLFE

WITHIN the past few weeks several prominent Englishmen have followed the example of former President Hoover in drawing a distinction between the Nazi hierarchy and the German people in the matter of the persecution of the Jews. Professor Abel's book, too, lends weight to the contention that the recent pogroms in the Reich do not express the will of the German people. Even the average Nazi joined the party, the author concludes, without having a specific anti-Semitic bias.

The basis of "Why Hitler Came Into Power" is six hundred autobiographies of men who joined the Hitler movement before January 1, 1933. In order to learn what caused them to join the movement, the author conducted a contest, offering cash rewards to the eighteen contestants who submitted the "most detailed and trustworthy accounts." After being put to considerable trouble and personal expense and two years of enforced delay, Dr. Abel assembled his material and made his findings public in this painstaking book. It has a helpful chronology, an index, and a statistical appendix.

This volume is a sociologist's approach to the rise of Hitler. The findings contradict some of the popular views; they uphold others. Contrary to the usual opinion, the average Nazi recruit had regular employment; he was not hungry; he was not desperate. But he was disillusioned by the war and its aftermath. He hated the Versailles Treaty. Apropos of the Treaty, Professor Abel quotes the *Berliner Tageblatt's* prophecy of 1919: ". . . a military furor for revenge will sound in Germany within a few years, and a militant nationalism will engulf all."

Through the medium of his autobiographies the author traces the reasons why the Hitler movement grew from its original seven members to a force that controls the Reich. Bitterness against the government for the inflation and its weakness in international relations, the effectiveness of Hitler's uncouth propaganda, the ideological struggle, the spirit of adventure, the call of nationalism—these were some of the factors which swelled Hitler's ranks. The weakness of the book, it seems to this writer, is inherent in the fact that all the accounts are written by Nazis, many of whom undoubtedly wrote their stories with their superiors in mind. The author frankly acknowledges that this criticism "may still be valid."

This volume is readable and lucid. It does not attempt to help the reader who seeks answers to questions dealing with Hitler's future aggressive foreign policies. But for the reader who wants light thrown on the pre-1933 growth of the Nazi party, it provides interesting and valuable material.

Henry C. Wolfe is the author of "The German Octopus."

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A Musical Landmark

THE INTERNATIONAL CYCLOPEDIA OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS. Edited by Oscar Thompson. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1938. $12.50.

Reviewed by ARTHUR MENDEL

A REALLY fair and equipped review of a book of this sort could be written only after one had used it frequently for reference over a period of months or years. One can list offhand certain apparent virtues and defects; but those that will determine whether one habitually consults it may lie deeper.

Let it be said at once that this is a serious work, containing much useful and authoritative material, from which no such ludicrous list of boners can be compiled as may recently have entertained and (let us hope) enraged the reader of these columns. Its leading articles, signed by reputable authorities and attractively set off in large type, are in many cases excellent discussions. With the choice of writers one might sometimes quarrel. Such controversial questions as those of Wagner's ancestry, life, and significance, for example, might well have been left to someone more favorably situated for the formation of impartial conclusions than Otto Strobel—official collaborator with Wahnfried, and a Nazi appointee. But many of the writers have been more happily chosen.

The device of appending to each lengthy biographical article a chronological table, as well as a list of works, adds greatly to the ready reference usefulness of the cyclopedia, and leaves the body of the articles unencumbered for consecutive reading. It is unfortunate, on the other hand, that no consistent policy has been followed with regard to bibliographies. Some articles include them. For others, the classified bibliography at the back of the book must serve. This list is, as the Editor conservatively states, "not exhaustive"; it does not include references to articles in periodicals, which are often just as important as books; and its location and general layout do not make it inviting to consult. (Incidentally, the "convenience" of one-volume editions like this, which approach the bulk of an unabridged dictionary, escapes me.)

The shorter entries, some signed but most of them anonymous, are far less consistent than the extended articles. The inclusion of individual works by title will undoubtedly increase the usefulness of the book to many, though one trembles at the thought of deciding which works to omit. And an inspection of some of these items does not encourage one to repose great confidence in their accuracy. Bach's four *Passions* "remain gigantic landmarks to this day," writes A. H. M. If only they did! Actually, but two survive. The *Musikalisches Oper*, based on a theme given Bach by Frederick the Great in 1747, was not "published in 1741"; and it does not contain "five flute sonatas."

No choice among living musicians to be included is likely to please everyone. And if this work errs, it is more often on the side of including unimportant people than of omitting important ones. It rightly follows every European precedent in including many compatriot musicians and institutions not mentioned in other reference works. Even so, there are unexpected omissions, and some strange inclusions. Joseph Yasser and his remarkable "Theory of Evolving Tonality" are not mentioned. Was it necessary, on the other hand, to list all the works performed at the Metropolitan Opera House since its beginning? Or to give the name of the *Intendant* as well as the *Generalmusidirektor* for each of 50 German opera houses?

But it is in the briefest entries that the editing (not to mention the proof-reading!) has been really slipshod. Definitions are often incomplete and sometimes misleading (see *Half-step, Half-shift, Meantone*). *Sul Ponticello* should have been described in terms of effect as well as technique; *Sulla Tastiera* is omitted altogether. The articles *Flageolet, Flute*, and *Recorder* present a strangely incomplete, uncoördinated, and at times contradictory story.

As the first American musical reference work on such a scale, this Cyclopedia is a landmark in our development as a music-loving nation. Twenty years ago is could not have been published. Twenty years hence it will have been superseded, one hopes, by works of more consistent and scrupulous scholarship. Meanwhile it will have given real help to many seeking information which they would not know how to find elsewhere.

Arthur Mendel contributes articles on music to leading magazines, and translated Paul Bekker's "The Changing Opera."

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE CASE OF THE BECKONING DEAD *John Donavan* (Hillman-Curl: $2.)	Several "accidental" deaths in London spiritualistic circle start Sgt. Lamb on quiet investigation which uncovers crool killer.	Vivid descriptions and explanations of supernatural manifestations more interesting than sleuthing in "vengeance is mine" affair.	Entertaining
DEATH TOOK A GREEK GOD *Norman Forrest* (Hillman-Curl: $2.)	Handsome English movie star killed on set; assistant director peculiarly drowned. Insp. Grief and medico-dick Finnegan solve crimes.	Ingenious murder methods and their clever unraveling furnish most of interest in yarn with slightly improbable solution.	Fair
FOUR FRIGHTENED WOMEN *George Harmon Coxe* (Knopf: $2.)	Actress and radio comic slain at latter's Pohassett palace. Kent Murdock, seeking pictures, finds plenitude of trouble.	The ladies are lovely, the action rough, the killings are baffling, the dialogue tough, the sleuthing is clever—and that's enough.	Pungent
THAT DINNER AT BARDOLPH'S *R. A. J. Walling* (Morrow: $2.)	Killing of crooked financial wizard makes several nice suspects play cat-and-mouse game with Yard.	Reissue of ten-year-old Walling yarn, which wears well and suffers not at all from absence of Mr. Tolefree.	As good as ever

American Folk Stories

COYOTE WISDOM. Edited by J. Frank Dobie, Mody C. Boatright, and Harry H. Ransom. Austin: Texas Folk-Lore Society, 1938.

TALL TALES AND SHORT. By Edmund Ware Smith. New York: Derrydale Press. 1938. $7.50.

Reviewed by WALTER BLAIR

THESE volumes, each in its way, attempt to recreate some of the charm of a form which, at its best, is a thing of delight—the oral tale. The method in "Coyote Wisdom" is genial scholarship; that in Mr. Smith's book is fictional artistry. The former method, in these instances, is more successful.

"Coyote Tales" introduces an ingratiating group of folklorists, amateur and professional, who obviously have high times listening to story-tellers and reporting findings. Just as important, one senses, back of considerations of tales and the tales themselves, original tellings of the yarns—by a wrinkled Pueblo Indian, perhaps, leaning against a sun-warmed mud wall, by a Mexican in his adobe hut, or by a cowboy beside a campfire. Accurate rendition captures much of the vitality characteristic of this literature at its best. And though Señor Coyote, the Southwestern rival of Southeastern Br'er Rabbit, is less engaging than Harris's negroid animal, he is distinctly worth meeting under such auspices. So, too, are others here celebrated—such heroes as Pie-Biter, Hugo the Frog, and the Fool Killer, created by the folk and felicitously interpreted by students who carry learning lightly.

Catercorner across the United States from the genial Texans, finding the fireside tale still holding out against the radio and the movie in the Maine woods, Edmund Ware Smith, in "Tall Tales and Short," attempted to communicate its

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fascination by imitating, in most of his narratives, the methods and materials of campfire yarns. The art of this genre is more difficult than one might suspect, since somehow, for all its apparent simplicity, the form magnifies even minor faults. Phrasings inappropriate for vernacular speech, touches of condescension, or an inability to order narrative details tellingly give an author away as an artificial imitator. Such slips mar most of Mr. Smith's stories. One, however, "Last Trip Together," is a splendid exception—a boy's account, simple, dextrous, and moving, of the journey with the body of his father from a hunting lodge to the distant town downstream. If other stories had reached an equally high level, the volume would have been an important accomplishment.

Children's Books in America

PETER PARLEY TO PENROD. A Bibliographical Description of the Best-Loved American Juvenile Books. By Jacob Blanck. 500 copies. New York: R. R. Bowker Co. 1938. $4.50.

Reviewed by JOHN T. WINTERICH

CHILDREN'S books, bibliographically speaking, are far from being child's play. The first edition of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" is as involved a production as a First Folio Shakespeare, and the earliest Rollo book is rather more elusive than the 1594 "Titus Andronicus." Technically, therefore, from a collector's point of view the juvenile has everything. And sentimentally as well. Not every owner of a first edition of Florio's Montaigne has ventured beyond the noble title-page, but every owner of a first "Toby Tyler" or "Captain January" has certainly read it entire in one edition or another.

"Peter Parley to Penrod" is much more, however, than a collector's manual. It presents an excellent conspectus of the juvenile book in America from the days of its first great nineteenth-century exponent, Samuel G. Goodrich, otherwise Peter Parley himself. It is significant to note how many important juveniles were originally serialized. And it is even more significant to note that the great majority of them were written (or at least issued) after their authors had passed their fortieth years.

The exceptions are few. Edward S. Ellis, the prodigy of the dime novel, became a Beadle author at twenty; Harry Castlemon (Charles Austin Fosdick) launched the Gun-Boat series at twenty-five; Jack London sounded "The Call of the Wild" at twenty-seven. But Charles Carleton Coffin published "The Boys of '76" at fifty-four, Elijah Kellogg the first of the Elm Island stories at fifty-six, and Lucretia Peabody Hale "The Peterkin Papers" at sixty—plus a sequel six years later. To cite the authors between forty and fifty would be virtually to list all the other names on Mr. Blanck's roster. Apparently one must become a parent or a grandparent, or at least an aunt or an uncle, to appreciate the child's book as an art form.

Dear, Dear Boy

CECIL BEATON'S NEW YORK. By Cecil Beaton. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1938. $4.

Reviewed by BENNETT A. CERF

A STAFF of two hundred men, working under the auspices of the Federal Writers' Project, recently completed, after a full year's research and editing, a book on the City of New York. Now Mr. Cecil Beaton, a young London man about town, who has lived in New York for only the shortest of intervals, and then mingled almost exclusively with a set as representative of the city as a band of Zulu cannibals, has provided us with another one. Mr. Beaton's particular set in Mayfair and on Park Avenue may take this volume to their hearts, but to the people who really know and love New York, his superficial, patronizing, and inaccurate generalities will have all the tang and appeal of a stale cream puff.

Mr. Beaton realized, of course, that he would have to widen his horizon for a book of this sort. If his New York was bounded heretofore by Mrs. Harrison Williams on the North and El Morocco on the South, he was ready now, by God, to explore the seamy side of town for the sake of art. Off, then, to Bellevue and wrestling matches, to the Museums and Harlem! Mr. Beaton saw all. His descriptions are as penetrating and revealing as those in a dozen guide books on sale for a quarter and less the country over. Like a true democrat, he mingled always with hoi polloi. His taxi, he tells us, he hired for twenty cents the first mile and five cents for each subsequent mile, and seemingly unaware of the exceptional bargain he had contrived, he fared forth, the while he engaged the driver in illuminating converse, and thereby studied the very best brand of American slang. To us, Mr. Beaton now reports, money has become "rope," "shut your mouth" has been transformed into "button up yer kisser," and "at particularly rowdy parties rah-rah boys shout at intervals the approving slogan, "razzle dazzle." My, my!

No book about New York would be complete without a few thumb-nail sketches of some of the dynamic and significant figures who are truly representative of the metropolis, and Mr. Beaton obliges with graceful bouquets for Doctor Kommer, Mrs. Vincent Astor, Mrs. Corrigan, Miss Elsa Maxwell, Mr. Raimund Von Hofmannsthal, Mrs. Harrison Williams, and a number of other moulders of that ever-changing melting pot of ours.

Last year Cecil Beaton drew a sketch for a magazine that was particularly childish and offensive; it necessitated a reprinting of thousands of copies and landed Mr. Beaton out on his ear. In his book on New York, Mr. Beaton has evidently gone to terrific pains to offend nobody. Maybe Cecil Beaton should stick to his photography for a while. There is a job that he knows and does exceptionally well. Otherwise, this book will be an unutterable bore for everybody in America except the group that already thinks he is a dear, dear boy.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 248)

ELIZABETH GASKELL—"CRANFORD"

She acknowledged that she always confused *carnivorous* and *graminivorous* together, just as she did *horizontal* and *perpendicular*; but . . . in her day the only use people made of four-syllabled words was to teach how they should be spelt.

Anatole France's Satiric Fantasy

PENGUIN ISLAND. By Anatole France. New York: Heritage Club. 1938.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

THE Heritage Club has reissued "Penguin Island," Anatole France's satiric fantasy about a nation of penguins who were baptized by the mistake of a short-sighted saint, and who, when the Lord had miraculously changed them into human beings (as He of course was bound to do, for otherwise His sacrament would have been void) provide a burlesque of the development of the human race and the history of France. After the idolatry he enjoyed in his later years, Anatole France's reputation of course declined sharply, and it will be long before we regain the stable society in which a mood of gentle skepticism seems the finest of attitudes. Nevertheless, the sly irony of "Penguin Island" still stands up remarkably well, especially in the earlier portions of the book, where the author deals with fundamental human traits, such as the relation of modesty and sex appeal; the latter half, with its elaborate parodies of the French governmental scandals of the turn of the century, requires a more detailed knowledge of all the actors involved than most Americans are likely to possess.

It will be seen that your reviewer has taken the trouble to reread "Penguin Island." If the same can be said for M. Sylvain Sauvage, who has illustrated this edition with ten water-colors, then he is a very self-willed man; for although his pictures are in themselves graceful and witty, he has disregarded the plainest indications in the book. Whereas France speaks of the short necks and thighs which betrayed the penguin origin of his people, M. Sylvain's caricatures are all some eight or nine heads tall; when France relates that in the stone age the first woman to cover her body thus attained the love of a herdsman, M. Sylvain shows us a Louis XV nymph and swain, keeping sheep *à la* Watteau. The illustrations, however, are pleasant in themselves; the binding, on the contrary, is a repellent imitation leather, which is described by the publishers in their accompanying slip as a fabric produced by the du Pont de Nemours Company. That is one way to describe it, but it still smells like fabrikoid.

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The New Books

Biography

PROFILES FROM THE NEW YORKER. *With a Preface by Clifton Fadiman. Knopf.* 1938. $3.

Twenty-three of the best profiles from *The New Yorker* are collected here, including Wolcott Gibbs's masterpiece on Henry ("backward ran sentences until reeled the mind") Luce, Jack Alexander's job on Vincent Astor, Alva Johnston's on Bishop Manning, ditto on Nicholas Murray Butler, Janet Flanner's on Queen Mary. A profile, says Mr. Fadiman incontrovertibly, is "not a short biography. It's not a personality sketch. It's not an exercise in the apt arrangement of anecdote. It's not a chronique scandaleuse. It's not an evaluation of character. It's all of these and none. It is—a Profile." In any event, it is one of the most deservedly popular departments in *The New Yorker,* and all the examples of the form included in this book are worth reading, many of them more than once.

G. S.

THE STORY OF THE WINGED-S. By Igor I. Sikorsky. Dodd, Mead. 1938. $3.

It's a wonderful bus, the Sikorsky;
Of humans it takes up a scoresky,
There is much motorovitch,
The mechanics for which
Sleep in bungalows built on the floorsky.

The limerick dates from 1915, when the big Russian airplanes were the only ones in the world that would take up a scoresky. Most people in aviation regarded the tall tales about their size, power, usefulness for transport and for war as Slavic hyperbole, and the planes themselves as something interesting but unimportant like the tiglon at the zoo. This book, a singularly unvarnished and unemotional narration, is the tale of how Igor Sikorsky turned the joke on the world. Whether the last of the aviation pioneers is describing how he lived on brown bread and beans in a six-dollar-a-week New York rooming house, or the moment of dizzying triumph when the S-38 taxied to her landing stage and he realized he had the best and fastest heavy airplane in the world, it is all plain, simple statement, from which the reader must work up his own blood pressure.

Still it is a statement one would not willingly miss, especially toward the end of the volume, where Mr. Sikorsky breaks down into the confession that at the crucial moment in airplane design, having made all calculations to the fifth decimal point, the engineer looks at the result and changes the most important parts because his intuition tells him they do not feel right.

F. P.

MADAME DE STAËL. PORTRAIT OF A LIBERAL IN THE REVOLUTIONARY AGE. By Margaret Goldsmith. Longmans, Green. 1938. $3.50.

Learning did not sit lightly on Germaine de Staël. She took herself with grim seriousness and she expected her contemporaries to regard her with like solemnity. Her heavy intellectualism, her persistent and not always polite curiosity, her witheringly dogmatic assurance, all contributed to the making of France's most inescapable bluestocking. Heiress to Necker's millions, she gained further renown from her wealth, while her long, weightily argumentative books appeared with sufficient frequency to keep her pretensions fresh. Nobody could ignore her, not even Napoleon, whose affected scorn concealed a not imprudent fear. She lived through violent and continuous change, social and political. For some of it she was responsible, at least left-handedly. Active or passive, however, she never ceased to deliver her opinions as if they were ultimatums to an ignorant and insignificant world. And the world listened; it might laugh a little in secret, but in public it exhibited a healthy respect.

Miss Goldsmith shares with Madame de Staël's contemporaries a rather uncritical admiration for the lady's prowess. She celebrates the high-priestess of an enlightened liberalism, the free-thinker who would suffer no restraints, the philosopher whose wisdom permitted no disagreement. She praises so zealously and so indiscriminately that she can give only a glance at inconsistencies in her subject's mental and physical life. Even the love affairs with such dissimilar men as Talleyrand and Constant are dismissed with almost no comment. Madame de Staël was undeniably a great and powerful woman. She was also ridiculous. This biography would be a better book if it were not blind to her absurdities.

C. D. A.

Fiction

SECOND MEETING. By Lucian Cary. Doubleday, Doran. 1938. $2.

There is no great divergence between Mr. Cary's novels. They are all amiable, straightforward, and entertaining. They are romantic idylls, which do not lead to extensive speculation. They do not leave any problems unresolved. If the heroine has failed to recognize the virtue of a good man and arranges an unfortunate marriage with a bad man, there is a reasonable expectation that Mr. Cary will fix things up by bringing back the original man. This is the essential problem in "Second Meeting." You'll be able to run through this novel very quickly and quite happily, but after you're out of breath you may find yourself in the position of the Red Queen, in the same place you started from.

R. S.

THE WAYFARER. By Shirley Seifert. Mill. 1938. $2.50.

This book is another morsel served up to satisfy our current hunger for picaresque novels which use the panorama of history as background. The story opens in Cayuga County, N. Y., during the 40s, when John Otis Cotter was a horse-loving lad with dreams of the West; and it closes in 1916 with aging John now the owner of a Missouri plantation and a string of race horses. In between are sandwiched adventures on a New Bedford whaler, a journey to gold-greedy California, years spent as an outrider along the Santa Fe Trail, John's marriage to a frontier merchant's daughter, his part in the siege of Vicksburg, the purchase and development of Grass Patch, the growth of Cotter children.

While the author deals with adventure, the story is quick-moving and filled with suspense. But in emotional crises the characters become woefully melodramatic. The history, though factually correct, is merely a backdrop before which they wander to meet with casual fortuity along the rim of civilization. John's cousin Miriam is the one well-rounded creation, and the story lags after her departure. With such material as the era of westward expansion at her command, Miss Seifert should have produced a better book. At least she might have stuck more closely to the exciting adventures of John's early life. For it is when he settles down with Molly that the story sinks into the doldrums.

R. W.

MR. CINDERELLA. By Rex Stout. Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. $2.

Very amusing story. It's about a young man who happened upon a discovery of a new cosmetic base, and who got rich on it, much against his better judgment. Mr. Stout, whose Nero Wolfe is one of the great characters of detective fiction, might have made a real satire on American business out of this story, but he preferred to keep it on the level of farcical extravaganza. This is perfectly all right with us, because the story is top-notch of its kind; it has the pace and action of the Nero Wolfe stories, and all we miss is the hard-boiled vernacular of the Wolfe stooge, Archie Goodwin. You can't ask for better summer reading at this time of the year than "Mr. Cinderella."

G. S.

Miscellaneous

WILD LONE. The Life of a Pytchley Fox. By "BB." Scribners. 1938. $3.

"One more book about a fox, by a fox-hunter," we said to ourself, and prepared to resist fox, fox-hunter, and book. Our resistance is broken down; we have capitulated, and all three have marched in upon us.

True, the materials are not really fresh. Every fox-hunting Englishman with any literary aspirations sooner or later writes this book. We mean, a book of this type. And here once again we have the pink-cheeked girl of the old manor, the hard-riding master of hounds, the old story of hounds lured to death on thin ice, the bluff old yeoman who ignobly *shoots* foxes instead of letting the dogs tear them to pieces as sportsmanship requires, and the brutal poacher, a criminal of the deepest die.

And yet, page by page, our resistance weakened. Finally we were an addict. Not of fox-hunting. We still think Oscar Wilde was right when he called it "the pursuit of the uneatable by the unspeakable." No, we succumbed to the author's feeling for nature. There is dew on every leaf of this book. Or, if the mood is not that of

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dawn, then it is the mood of twilight, that hour when one stares at the last western light until the silhouetted shapes of tree and nightjar print themselves upon the retina.

The life of Rufus the fox is not prettified. Eating and mating, smelling and running, are the sum of his existence, and the author makes his beast beastly. But even of beasthood he is no ordinary observer; he is very close to a poet.

The decorations by Denys Watkins-Pitchford are exquisite and the whole volume is an unusually fine piece of bookmaking.

D. C. P.

MEDICINE IN MODERN SOCIETY. By David Riesman. Princeton University Press. 1938. $2.50.

In recent times there have been many attempts to interpret the medical profession to the lay public. Few of the interpreters, however, have had Dr. Riesman's qualifications for the task and none have accomplished it more admirably. Dr. Riesman belongs to that group of teaching-physicians—William Osler's name is perhaps the most illustrious—who might have won equal distinction in either the scientific or the artistic fields. In their writings they display the depth of culture, the charm, and the astuteness that have quickened the minds of hundreds of students in amphitheaters and hospital wards. This present book was developed from a series of lectures delivered at Princeton. In fifteen chapters its author attempts to present and clarify those outstandingly significant facts related to the medical profession that he is convinced should be comprehended by every cultured person. A brief history of the early leaders and their gropings forms a background for the rapidly emerging discoveries of recent times, technicalities are explained, and considerable emphasis is given to the social aspects of these discoveries. In his tolerant and candid treatment of the non-scientific problems that confront every doctor—problems of medical ethics, of the choice of a career, of the "specialist," of medical care for the underprivileged—there is much to challenge every thoughtful reader, and the young medic will find Dr. Riesman's philosophic analysis no less steadying than it is stimulating.

M. S. U.

SCENERY FOR THE THEATRE. By Edward Cole and Harold Burris-Meyer. Little, Brown. 1938. $10.

Like everything that is best in the theater, this book has been a long time coming. For twenty years the amateur theater has discovered hit or miss ways and means of solving its own technical problems of play production. Numberless one-way works have been written for its benefit. These books on lighting, scenery, and production have succeeded in guiding the Tributary Theater safely through the age of adolescence. Now "Scenery for the Theatre" escorts the Little Theater out of the kindergarten. It is planned for the adult amateur. Here is a manual in the true sense of the word. It should be in the hands, not on the shelf, of every

(*Continued on next page*)

Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD Q. tries conscientiously to clear up news items that have accumulated on his desk. ☞William M. Sloane, lately of the editorial staff of the Book-of-the-Month Club, has joined Henry Holt and Company as manager of the Trade Department. ☞Mr. F. S. Crofts's recent lecture at the N. Y. Public Library, *Textbooks Are Not Absolutely Dead Things,* has been published by the Library and is available in booklet form for 25c, postage prepaid. ☞Mr. Crofts discusses some of the peculiar problems of the educational publisher; it pleases us to see that he is cautious about the tendency to window-dress and "modernize" some contemporary textbooks in a phony and freakish sort of Beach of Bali format. ☞The fantasies and politics of that prodigious market Mr. Crofts gently asymptotes; he tells one anecdote that startled poor old simpleton Q.:—

> "Shortly after *The Mind in the Making* appeared, I told Professor James Harvey Robinson that we had been offered a large adoption of his book by a teacher's reading circle. His objections were so strenuous that we declined the adoption. 'If,' said he, 'the school authorities discover my personal liberal views, they will cancel the much more lucrative contracts they now have for my textbooks.' And I could not but admit that this was sound business judgment."

☞Duncan Burnet, librarian of the University of Georgia, suggests (apropos our allusion to a college Reading List compiled by the National Council of Teachers of English) that A. D. Dickinson's compilations *1000 Best Books* (1924) and *Best Books of Our Time* (1928) give an interesting picture of what was bing recommended to undergraduates of an earlier epoch. ☞In Schulte's catalogue (80 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.) we find a mysterious item: Bliss Carman's *Address to the Graduating Class MCMXI of the Unitrinian School of Personal Harmonizing.* (One of 250 copies, $3.) Wish some member of the 1911 class of Personal Harmonizers would tell us about this and how things have gone since? ☞In the same catalogue, Ambrose Bierce's *The Shadow on the Dial,* edited by S. O. Howes (San Francisco, 1909). There must still be a few bookmen who remember Silas Howes, who was in his later years on the staff of Brentano's Bookshop. He was a genuine bibliophile: it was he who first got Q. steamed up about George Gissing. ☞We would have stated (if we had known) that the exclusive sales agent for John T. Winterich's *23 Books and the Stories Behind Them* (published by the Book Arts Club of California, and noted here con mucho gusto last week) is Philip C. Duschnes, 507 Fifth Avenue. ☞The scholarly and contriving Mr. Duschnes also showed us a dummy of Bruce Rogers's folio Shakespeare (Limited Editions Club) for which a binding-paper has been designed which is sentimental News. ☞In 1930, as Shakespeareans know, there came to light in

John Hadfield

Oxford an old panelled room in the premises at Number 3, Cornmarket (now, we believe, a tailor and haberdasher?), which was once a bedroom in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Davenant, Shakespeare's very special friends. With the Davenants —and, by tradition, particularly with Mrs. — Will Shakespeare used to stay on his journeys to and from London. At any rate an offspring Davenant, Sir William the poet, was Shakespeare's godson and had no hesitation in asserting that his mother had been Leda to the Swan of Avon. ☞Bruce Rogers had the pleasantest idea of reproducing the old painted panelling of Mrs. Davenant's bedchamber as a binding for this new edition; and says, with his own incomparable mischief, "A cover design reproducing a pattern that the Poet himself may have admired as he lay abed of a morning in his friend's house, perhaps composing his next play." ☞We take pleasure in printing a picture of Mr. John Hadfield of Dent's, whose article on scouting for books in America appears on page 16 of this issue.

☞Among the too few innocent diversions of a grim year have been Deputy Mayor (of N. Y. C.) Henry H. Curran's occasional outgivings, on such ecumenical topics as dogs, cockroaches, bald heads, grammar, etc. If Mr. Curran ever puts any of these in printed form we hope he'll add Old Q. to his mailing list. ☞The Hampstead Edition of John Keats—his complete known writings, in 8 volumes—is announced by Scribner; and will be designed and supervised by T. M. Cleland. The issue will be limited to 1025 sets; and don't forget that January 20 is St. Agnes Eve. ☞Burrows Bros.' well known bookstore in Cleveland has handsomely rebuilt its whole Euclid Avenue front and put new fixtures and lighting throughout the main floor. This autumn marked the 65th anniversary of this active business, and Gordon Bingham's 20th year as president. ☞E. Douglas

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Branch (of the University of Pittsburgh) reviewing Dr. Cecil K. Drinker's *Not So Long Ago*—a chronicle of Colonial medicine drawn from the journals of Elizabeth Drinker in the years 1758-1807—says that Dr. Drinker has been caught by Mr. H. L. Mencken's "Great Bathtub Hoax." ☞If we read correctly, Mr. Mencken invented a jape that in 1853 the Common Council of Philadelphia tried to prohibit tub-bathing between October and March; and historians fell for it. ☞We should admire to know the timing and diffusion of this jest?

☞We are glad to hear that Arthur Davison Ficke's *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter*, o. p. for some years, are now available again in his *Selected Poems* ($2). ☞The monthly bulletins of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis from Oct. 1937 to Oct. 1938 are now on sale in a bound volume for $2. We have been interested in what we have heard about the Institute and its study of "the sources, agencies, techniques and devices used in the formation of public opinion." The bound volume should be worth study by pensive or dubitating observers of the Mass Malleable and Pregnable. ☞"The primary claim of printing," said Stanley Morison (in his lecture *The Art of Printing*, delivered to the British Academy, 1937; now published by Oxford Press, $3) "is not to be an art, but to be the most responsible of our social, industrial, and intellectual mechanisms."

Karel Capek, 1890-1938

All men suffer loss in the early death of Karel Capek (of which we learn as we go to press). He had the innermost rare gift: that of simple wisdom, pellucid truth. This the world ("like a guilty thing surprised") usually tries to evade by calling it satire or fantasy.

The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

school and theater. It covers the whole field of contemporary theater practice: that is, the organization, processes, materials, and techniques used to set the stage.

Over five hundred and seventy-five illustrations of every description combined with Mr. Cole's and Mr. Burris-Meyer's vast knowledge of their subject combine to make this a source book with an air of legal finality. Such a book could scarcely avoid the tedious pattern of court room procedure. Yet the thoroughness of content almost counterweights the ponderousness of detail; and, like any legal brief, it could never be read through for pleasure. But every element in the complicated machinery of play production from knots to sightlines, from ratchets to call boards, is clearly and professionally detailed and accurately related. It is the book to end all books on the subject.

D. O.

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THE BOUDOIR COMPANION. Edited by Page Cooper. Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. $2.50.

Following up the success of "The Bedroom Companion"—a book about women written by men—Messrs. Farrar & Rinehart had the idea of compiling a book about men written by women. But they made the error of titling the future volume "The Boudoir Companion." So naturally at least half the women wrote about women. For naturally no woman thinks of a man as a boudoir companion. A boudoir is a bedroom without a man in it—a place where you let down your hair, in the absence of men.

These extremely clever women have indeed let down their hair alike on the subject of bedroom and boudoir companions. The tone about their boudoir companions is vindictive; but toward their bedroom companions they seem to feel only that amused tolerance with which the reasonable sex regards that delightful creature of impulse, convention, and instinct, the man. With tenderness just touched with exasperation, they write of his pathetic dignity, foolish and touching as that of a child, his pretensions to omnipotence and omniscience, of his devotion to tribal garments and tribal ways.

The level of performance is astonishingly high for a collection of this sort. The funniest story is Rose Feld's glimpse of Balkan chivalry; the neatest essay, Sophie Kerr's exposé of the Kiss-the-Hand boys. And surprisingly enough, the bitterest comment on men is a drawing of Lois Lenski's; the bawdiest, one of Helen Sewell's. Why should these two artists be blushing unseen in the world of juvenile books, when their function is so patently to make the adult world itself blush?

K. S.

SHADOW OVER EUROPE. By Shepard Stone. Foreign Policy Association. 1938. 25 cents.

To write a lucid, readable, and thorough account of the rise of Hitler in a brochure of 25,000 words is an achievement. And when the writer includes in his sketch an outline of German history and brings his account up to the present, it is something of a feat. That is what Shepard Stone has done in "Shadow Over Europe."

In this interesting little panorama of Germany's past and present, the writer has not attempted to blame or praise. He tells his story in simple, graphic language and leaves it to the reader to form his own opinion. One might read a dozen books about Germany and Hitler and still not have the satisfactory grasp of the problem assured by an hour's reading of Dr. Stone's excellent primer.

"Shadow Over Europe" makes no claim to being definitive. What the author clearly had in mind was to turn out an unbiased piece of groundwork from which the reader might explore the German question with books of the past, present, and future. All interested laymen, from grammar school students to adults, will find this summary valuable for an understanding of the background and complexities of one of the most vital subjects of our time.

H. C. W.

CLASSIFIED

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PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere, miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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TROVILLION PRIVATE PRESS, Herrin, Illinois, republishes for first time since 1653, Thomas Hyll's First Garden Book—earliest English garden book known. Limited edition, $2.50 copy.

Double-Crostics: No. 249

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-*	2-E	3-L	4-G	5-Q	6-C	7-T		8-F	9-H		10-Z	11-Y	12-V	13-U	14-W	15-P	16-D
	17-B		18-Z	19-E	20-S	21-K		22-V	23-D	24-K		25-F		26-R	27-C	28-U	29-D
30-B	31-J		32-K		33-Y	34-Q	35-P	36-G	37-E		38-Z	39-T	40-E	41-V	42-O		43-C
44-N		45-K	46-A		47-N		48-L	49-X	50-W	51-Y	52-D		53-T	54-H	55-Z	56-V	57-W
	58-N	59-F	60-X	61-V		62-N	63-B		64-Z	65-M	66-F		67-R	68-J	69-I	70-D	71-L
	72-A	73-B		74-U	75-X	76-H		77-Z	78-Y	79-R	80-T	81-S	82-K		83-R	84-P	85-A
86-S		87-A		88-R	89-P	90-A	91-G	92-V	93-U		94-W	95-A	96-Z	97-X	98-E	99-D	
100-C	101-F	102-K		103-K	104-A		105-W	106-V	107-E	108-Y		109-W	110-S	111-Y	112-I	113-D	114-R
	115-Z	116-J	117-I	118-B	119-W	120-G	121-M		122-B	123-K		124-O	125-U	126-W	127-M	128-G	
129-S	130-J	131-O		132-K	133-A	134-M		135-Q	136-T	137-X	138-H	139-L		140-R	141-W	142-F	143-C
144-Y	145-E	146-O		147-J	148-A		149-A	150-I		151-Y		152-W	153-X	154-Z	155-Y	156-S	157-P
158-E		159-W	160-K	161-G	162-N	163-J		164-B	165-N		166-G	167-I		168-G	169-N		170-V
171-G	172-X	173-O	174-H	175-B	176-Q	177-T											

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Character in "Comedy of Errors."

B. Character in "Richard III."

C. Character in "As You Like It."

D. Character in "Henry IV."

E. Patron of Letters (70-8 B.C.).

F. Name of "C." above in disguise.

G. Earliest flag of the American Colonies.

H. Character in "King John."

I. Character in "Midsummer Night's Dream."

J. Character in "Cymbeline."

K. Given name of Gautama Buddha.

L. Hacks (vb.).

M. Character in "Richard III."

N. Character in "Othello."

O. Character in "King Lear."

P. Character in "King Lear."

Q. Character in "Othello."

R. To contend in rivalry.

S. Character in "Julius Caesar."

T. M'f'g. city of New Hampshire.

U. Italian painter (ca. 1480-1556).

V. Feast of the coming of the Magi.

W. Poem by Bryant.

X. Great cartoonist of "Punch" (1820-1914).

Y. Age following Victorian.

Z. Rational.

WORDS

87 104 148 149 95 133 72 85 90 46

118 17 164 175 30 122 63 73

6 27 143 43 100

99 23 70 52 29 113 16

2 40 107 98 158 145 19 37

59 142 8 66 101 25

120 168 171 166 4 161 36 91 128

138 76 54 174 9

167 112 117 69 150

147 116 68 163 31 130

123 45 21 102 82 32 24 132 160 103

71 3 48 139

121 65 127 134

58 62 169 44 47 162 165

42 131 146 124 173

35 15 157 89 84

5 176 135 34

140 83 67 26 114 88 79

129 20 81 110 156 86

177 7 53 39 136 80

125 28 13 93 74

56 41 12 106 92 170 22 61

159 14 105 50 141 109 126 57 94 119 152

153 172 60 75 49 97 137

11 51 33 151 78 108 144 155 111

154 55 1 38 64 10 115 77 18 96

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